Should We Be Surprised "Anti-War" Gabbard Auditions for Trump?

written by Stanley Heller | December 4, 2016

After tens of thousands of young people rushed to the streets to denounce Trump's election, "Sanderista" Tulsi Gabbard's made different kind of headlines. She answered Donald Trump's call and went to a vetting meeting. Yes, after the election all the Democrat pols gave the usual clichés about cooperation with Trump on certain matters, as if Trump were just some other Republican. That's bad enough, but this was something more. Gabbard was actually looking to join the Trump Administration. She denies it. She ludicrously claims this was just a meeting to talk about Syria and the need for peace. As if "peace" was uppermost in Trump's mind now. As if he wasn't spending all his time visiting Alt-Right sewers and billionaire clubs to staff his cabinet.

Gabbard was pretty unknown on the Left until February when she became one of the few members of Congress to support Bernie Sanders' bid for the presidency. However, on international issues (as Louis Proyect clearly pointed out) she's far, far from the Left. On Israel she's about as far Right as you can get, appearing at a 2015 conference of the batshit crazy CUFI, Christians United For Israel. This is the group whose minister John Hagee welcomed world war with Iran as a step to Armageddon and who John McCain had to break with in 2008 on account of Hagee's remarks saying Hitler had helped fulfill God's will. In July 2014 while Israel was pummeling Gaza she co-sponsored a total whitewash of Netanyahu's warfare which among other things claimed Israel "goes to extraordinary lengths to target only terrorist actors."

She's very friendly to military budget increases and supports assassinations by drones. Her views on Islam should be better known. She broke with the Obama line of trying to oppose al-Qaeda without inciting people against Islam. No George W. Bush or Obama nice words for her about Islam. She wants to talk about "extremism" 24/7. The right wing *National Review* just loved her. So did "all religion is bad, but Muslims are worse" Bill Maher who brought her on his show.

Then there's her warm relationship with the Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, and his BJP. The BJP is a Hindu Nationalist Party (you do know what nationalist means?). In 2002 Modi was chief minister of Gujarat. In February of that year 56 Hindus were burned to death on a train. Without evidence Modi blamed Pakistan and paraded the charred bodies of Hindu victims through the streets. Mobs attacked Muslims killing around a thousand. An Indian court cleared Modi of criminal responsibility, but many would agree with Aditya Chakrabortty who wrote that Modi has a "massacre on his hands." That was then. Now Modi rules all of India and Al Jazeera notes a big increase in attacks on Muslims and people who eat beef. None of this bothers Gabbard. Here is video of an appearance in Atlanta in 2014 of Gabbard with "Friends of the BJP."

These days Syria is Gabbard's big issue and she's been public in criticizing Obama for supposedly causing the war as another U.S. "regime change" operation. When the Russians began bombing Syria directly in September 2015 she was a supporter! She was the only Democrat to vote against a resolution condemning war crimes against civilians in Syria.

Could it be…and I'm going way out on a limb here…that Gabbard's "anti-war" sentiments have more to do with opposing Islam than supporting peace? Just sayin'.

You would think her Trump meeting would be universally denounced by the Left. It wasn't. Two on the Left who are consumed with making sure no one comes to the aid of Syrians looked upon the Gabbard-Trump meeting sympathetically.

Robert Parry is among those who see the puppet masters of American Imperialism behind everything that happens.. In his piece on the meeting with Trump, Parry highlights her claim that she had to rush in "before the drumbeat of war that neocons have been beating drag[s] us into an escalation of the war to overthrow the Syrian government." Sure the neocons are rushing to talk about Assad horrors, but so is every human rights organization and medical aid society that helps Syrians. Is it really war-mongering for the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times* to allow the White Helmets to mention that medical facilities are all being blasted to hell or that a million Syrians are under siege and hungry?

Parry speculates, without a morsel of evidence, that Trump might go after the Saudis: "President Trump might eschew the 'whack-a-mole' approach that has bedeviled the 'war on terror' and instead go after the 'mole nest' – if you will – the Saudi monarchy." Parry summarizes, warning that the neocons still are strong, but "the Trump transition is showing some creativity in assembling a national security team that may go in a very different direction." Give me a break.

Then there's Stephen Kinzer, who in April wrote a piece entitled "Trump's Refreshing Foreign Policy Heresy." This week he ran true to form. He tweeted congratulations to Gabbard for meeting with Trump to avoid "escalation" and "regime change warfare."

This is madness. Balance the people Trump is appointing to his cabinet as opposed to his "anti-war" mumblings and see what he really believes.

Rather than read Parry and Kinzer, folks should follow Charles Blow**,** a very moderate *New York Times* columnist, who supported Clinton in the election, but who from day one understood what Trump represents. In "America Elects a Bigot" he wrote about Trump, "That is not a person worthy of applause. That is a person who must be placed under unrelenting pressure. Power must be challenged, constantly. That begins today." In a second column about a *NYT* meeting with Trump he wrote, "I will say proudly and happily that I was not present at this meeting. The very idea of sitting across the table from a demagogue who preyed on racial, ethnic and religious hostilities and treating him with decorum and social grace fills me with disgust."

In the first column he wrote this sentence: "Count me among the resistance." Magnificent. It should be our motto. *"Count me among the resistance."*

Stanley Heller is a long time activist on Middle East, environmental, and trade union issues. He manages the blog www.EconomicUprising.com