



The Nuclear Button: What Prospects for Peace Under A Trump Administration? An Urgently Needed Reality Check on the Outcome of the USA Presidential Election

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The rejection by the US people of the domestic and foreign policy advocated by Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton and the election of Donald Trump to the Presidency of the USA has momentarily disoriented the US NATO preparations for provoking a war with Russia and given some space for a renewal of peace diplomacy to avoid global nuclear war.

Among Trumps first acts as President-elect was to talk by phone with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Trump's election has been greeted with cautious optimism by the Putin administration reflecting the hopes of the Russian people who know what war is and who support a reduction in tensions between the two major nuclear armed states.

The possibility that US Russian relations will take on a less confrontational tone can be attributed to a large constituency among US voters, including many Democrats who viewed Clinton as the war candidate of US imperialism. The US people in their majority veered away from the certainty of global nuclear war and voted in favour of the possibility of avoiding such a war.

It is noteworthy that Clinton's resort to discredited McCarthyite style cold war rhetoric was not effective nor did it put Trump on the defensive. The US electorate was not stampeded by Hillary Clinton's branding her opponent as untrustworthy to manage the US nuclear arsenal. A Trump finger on the nuclear button was not considered by American voters to be any greater a threat to peace than Hillary Clinton's finger on the nuclear button.

Trump's statements mildly critical of NATO and his avowed interest in meeting Putin indicates a trend among the US people who support a less belligerent US government foreign policy that Trump gave voice to and Hillary Clinton scorned.

The characterization of President elect Trump as the leader of a US fascist movement is misguided and counter-productive to the peace movement taking advantage of a small opening to reduce international tensions.

The US electorate on both sides of the political ledger did not vote for fascism and will not support it. The fear mongering and cold war psychological terror used for so long by the US

industrial and military complex to bleed the US treasury dry to support endless wars and deny the American people such urgent reforms as a publicly funded health care system began to unravel in the US presidential election campaign. All those who benefit from war and the preparations for war have been compelled to retreat and re-think.

The US election outcome is contradictory and controversial. To wait passively to see what will happen is not an option for the peace movement.

The same task now confronts the American people with Donald Trump assuming the Presidency as confronted the Canadian people with the election of Justin Trudeau as Prime Minister.

The US voters in an important election have altered the terrain of the struggle for peace within the confined limits of a capitalist democracy. The only valid option for the peace movement is to use the changed situation to intensify pressure on government for a decisive step towards peace, nuclear disarmament and a reduction in international tensions.

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