The CIA Democrats in the 2020 Elections. More Military-Intelligence and FBI Candidates

By Patrick Martin

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In the course of the 2018 elections, a large group of former military-intelligence operatives entered capitalist politics as candidates seeking the Democratic Party nomination in 50 congressional seats—nearly half the seats where the Democrats were targeting Republican incumbents or open seats created by Republican retirements. Some 30 of these candidates won primary contests and became the Democratic candidates in the November 2018 election, and 11 of them won the general election, more than one quarter of the 40 previously Republican-held seats captured by the Democrats as they took control of the House of Representatives. In 2020, the intervention of the CIA Democrats continues on what is arguably an equally significant scale.

More military-intelligence and FBI candidates

The number of contested congressional seats in 2018 was unusually large, as the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee targeted 115 seats, about half of those in the Republican caucus. Candidates from military-intelligence backgrounds won the nomination for 30 of those seats, making them the largest single occupational group, ahead of lawyers (20), state and local politicians (26), businessmen (15), and others (24).

The likely takeover targets have shrunk in number because of the Democratic success in 2018. Only 31 seats are on the DCCC's "red-to-blue" shopping list, and even of these, one is held by a Democrat already. That leaves 30 seats now held by Republicans but targeted for potential takeover. Of these, five have military-intelligence operatives as the Democratic nominees: Feehan, Jones, Jacobs, Kulkarni and Johnson, profiled above.

Another 18 military-intelligence candidates are running in districts held by Republicans that are not currently considered competitive but could become so in some cases if the Democratic edge in the election widens significantly—it is currently averaging about seven percent in the polls. The number of CIA Democrats in the House of Representatives could rise to as many as 20, depending on political shifts between now and November 3.

Reviewing the biographies of these candidates, based on the information they themselves chose to present on their campaign websites, gives a glimpse of the social types who are being attracted to and mobilized by the Democratic Party's campaign against Trump, and particularly by the incessant claims that Trump is a Russian stooge and that his victory in 2016 was the product of "Russian meddling" in the elections.

By region, these candidates include:

Northeast

New Jersey, 4th Congressional District: Stephanie Schmid, a retired Foreign Service officer, is opposing incumbent Christopher Smith, an anti-abortion zealot who has held the seat for 40 years. A former attorney, Schmid joined the Foreign Service in 2011 and worked in Haiti, Brazil and Washington, D.C. Her website declares, "Stephanie has proudly served with Republican and Democratic leaders who have always put country before party."

Pennsylvania, 13th Congressional District: Todd Rowley, a retired FBI counterintelligence officer, is the Democrat opposing first-term Republican John Joyce. Rowley is a former policeman, state trooper and paramedic who spent 24 years as an FBI agent engaged primarily in paramilitary and counterintelligence operations, including liaison with the CIA and the Director of National Intelligence.

Image on the right: Todd Rowley

Maryland, 1st Congressional District: Mia Mason is a retired 20-year military veteran, who "completed a total of 5 combat tours between Iraq and Afghanistan while serving in the Navy and Army," according to her campaign website. She was discharged from the military for being gay and then brought back in. She was "onboard USS *Kitty Hawk* CV-63 for Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom." She is opposing five-term Republican incumbent Andy Harris in a district that comprises the rural eastern shore of Maryland.

Pennsylvania, 14th Congressional District: William Marx retired from the Marines after a 16-year career and is now a high school teacher and local councilman. He is running against first-term incumbent Republican Guy Reschenthaler in this southwest Pennsylvania seat.

Image on the left: Bill Marx

Midwest

Ohio, 14th Congressional District: Hillary O'Connor Mueri was a Navy pilot, who flew combat missions during the Iraq war to provide close air support to ground forces. She went to law

school after the military, specializing in product litigation in the aviation industry. Mueri is running against four-term incumbent David Joyce in a mixed suburban and rural district extending northeast from Cleveland along Lake Erie.

Wisconsin, 1st Congressional District: Roger Polack was recruited by the US intelligence services while a student at the University of Wisconsin and trained to specialize in Asian affairs. His web site declares: "Roger served multiple tours as a civilian intelligence officer in Afghanistan, spending 20 months on the ground first as an analyst for, and then Deputy Director of, the Afghanistan Threat Finance Cell. He sat face to face with Taliban detainees, helped plan law enforcement and military operations, and managed the intelligence priorities of 40 civilian and military staff."

In other words, the Democratic candidate in the district formerly held by Republican Paul Ryan, now by first-term Republican Bryan Steil, should be investigated for possible connections to torture and assassination. But in the eyes of the Democratic Party leadership, this record is a credential, not the mark of Cain.

Image on the right: Chip Coldiron in Afghanistan

Indiana, 3rd Congressional District: Chip Coldiron is an Army veteran deployed twice to Afghanistan, who became a health care worker and then schoolteacher after leaving the military. He is running against four-term incumbent Jim Banks in a district centered on Ft. Wayne.

South

Kentucky, 6th District: Josh Hicks is a Marine veteran turned policeman. In his four years on active duty, he was deployed twice with the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit, rising to the rank of sergeant. He went to work as a policeman in eastern Kentucky, becoming a member of the SWAT team. He is running against four-term incumbent Andy Barr in a district centered on the city of Lexington.

North Carolina, 11th Congressional District: Morris Davis is the former chief prosecutor at the Guantanamo Bay prison camp, although he was forced out by the Bush administration because he objected to the use of testimony obtained through torture of detainees. The Guantanamo posting was the culmination of a 25-year military career as a Judge Advocate

General in the Air Force. Davis is running for the Asheville-based seat formerly held by Mark Meadows, now White House Chief of Staff for Trump. He was initially a heavy underdog to 25-year-old Madison Cawthorn, a right-wing activist who won an upset victory in the Republican primary, but Cawthorn is now caught up in a scandal over social media postings of his trip to see Hitler's vacation hideaway in the Bavarian Alps, which he tweeted was "on his bucket list" of must-see locations.

Georgia, 1st Congressional District: Joyce Marie Griggs retired with the rank of lieutenant colonel after a 33-year career in Army intelligence. She won the Democratic primary to face incumbent three-term Republican Buddy Carter in a district centered the city of Savannah. According to her website: "Among her many decorations, medals, and badges are the Bronze Star, Defense Meritorious Service, and Global War on Terrorism Service medals, and the Parachutist badge." Griggs had three tours in Iraq in 2007, 2008 and 2010.

Georgia, 9th Congressional District: Devin Pandy, like Griggs, is a career Army intelligence officer, who initially specialized in electronic warfare systems maintenance and was deployed overseas five times, to Panama, Kuwait, Iraq and Afghanistan, retiring as a Chief Warrant Officer 2. He boasts of coming from an Army family, with his grandfather in World War II, his father in the Persian Gulf War of 1990-91, and his brother and sister-in-law also in the military. Pandy is the Democratic candidate for the seat vacated by right-wing Republican Doug Collins, who is running for US Senate. He will face Republican Andrew Clyde, a businessman and Navy veteran with a huge financial advantage.

Image below: Devin Pandy (left)

Florida, 1st Congressional District: Philip Ehr is a repeat candidate from 2018, when he lost to incumbent Matt Gaetz, perhaps the most fervent Trump supporter in Congress, by a 2-1 margin in a district that comprises Pensacola and much of the Florida Panhandle. According to his campaign website, in the course of his 26-year career as a Navy seaman and pilot: "He flew reconnaissance missions in the Cold War, Desert Storm and post-9/11 operations; oversaw U.S. air operations in NATO's 78-day bombing campaign in the Balkans; organized operational intelligence support to non-DOD Federal agencies; improved electronic warfare readiness of Allied forces; and provided strategic advice to senior leaders in Washington and London."

Florida, 12th Congressional District: Kimberly Walker was in the Army for eight years, then a prison guard, and is now a civilian employee of Centcom, the US military command for all operations in the Middle East and Afghanistan, headquartered in Tampa. After the military and prison system, Walker was hired as an IT contractor at MacDill Air Force Base, then "accepted a position as a Software Engineer at United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM)." Later she became a contractor for Centcom headquarters. She is the Democratic candidate against four-term incumbent Republican Gus Bilirakis, who has a 50-1 advantage in terms of fundraising.

Florida, 18th Congressional District: Pam Keith is a former Judge Advocate General in the Navy, who continued in the legal profession and became a legal counsel to Florida Power & Light. Keith lost the Democratic primary in 2018 to another military-intelligence candidate but ran again in 2020 and won Tuesday's primary easily. She will oppose two-term incumbent Republican Brian Mast, himself a combat veteran who lost his legs to a roadside bomb in Afghanistan.

Alabama, 1st Congressional District: James Averhart retired from the Marine Corps as a Chief Warrant Officer Five after a 30-year career, mainly as a military policeman, rising to head the Marine Corps Correction Service (the prison for Marines convicted of criminal offenses on duty). He was in combat in Operation Desert Shield and Operation Desert Storm (the two phases of the 1990-1991 Persian Gulf War). As the Democratic candidate in the Mobile-based 1st Congressional District, left vacant by the retirement of Republican Bradley Byrne, Averhart is a prohibitive underdog to Republican nominee Jerry Carl, a Mobile County commissioner, who has raised $1.7 million to Averhart's $50,000.

Oklahoma, 2nd Congressional District: Danyell Lanier is a Navy veteran and health care trainer who won an uncontested primary for the Democratic nomination against five-term incumbent Republican Markwayne Mullin. Lanier's website gives little biographical information about her. Mullin has raised $1.3 million compared to $18,000 for Lanier.

Colorado, 4th Congressional District: Ike McCorkle is a retired Marines Corps special forces officer, who boasts of a military family, including two grandfathers, his father, a brother and two cousins. According to his campaign website, he retired in 2014 "to recover from eighteen hard years of service in the USMC Infantry and Spec Ops communities." McCorkle deployed six times overseas, four times in combat, was wounded multiple times, and medically retired with the rank of captain. He is the Democratic candidate in the heavily rural district covering the eastern third of Colorado, against three-term incumbent Ken Buck, an extreme right-winger.

Utah, 2nd Congressional District: Kael Weston spent seven years as a military adviser in Iraq and Afghanistan, more than any other State Department official. According to his campaign website, he was "State Department Political Adviser to a dozen Marine commanding generals, including during and after the biggest battle of the Iraq War (Fallujah, 2004-2007)." He also played a significant role in Afghanistan, in the city of Khost and as a Marine Corps adviser in Helmand province, one of the bloodiest battlegrounds against the Taliban. Weston is a published author and has written regularly for the corporate media on counterterrorism and military subjects. He will be the Democratic candidate against four-term incumbent Republican Chris Stewart, who is a heavy favorite and enjoys a 4-1 fundraising advantage.

Some conclusions

There is one other aspect of this list that has political significance. It represents the intersection of the pro-imperialist orientation of the Democratic Party and identity politics. Of the 18 candidates given thumbnail descriptions above, six are African American (Griggs, Pandy, Walker, Keith, Averhart and Lanier), and three more are white women (Schmid, Mason and Mueri). In other words, half of these military-intelligence candidates are examples of "diversity," although enabling minorities and women to commit the same crimes previously committed by white men would not seem to be an improvement.

Not every one of these 18 candidates is a monster or a war criminal. But then there are those whose background is so filthy that they provide an unanswerable argument against claims, put forward by groups like the Democratic Socialists of America, that it is possible to "reform" the Democratic Party and even to transform it into a vehicle for social progress.

What does it say about the Democratic Party that it has, among its candidates for Congress, a half dozen career military intelligence operatives, the longest-serving civilian adviser to US military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, the former chief prosecutor at Guantanamo Bay, and the former overseer of prisons for the Marine Corps? What of the record of FBI counterintelligence officer Todd Rowley? His campaign website deserves a more extended citation:

> Todd served as the FBI's senior liaison representative to the U.S. Intelligence Community (USIC) regarding the FBI's role in support of and counterintelligence efforts related to U.S. government overseas sensitive and classified construction projects in critical threat countries. Todd regularly interacted with FBIHQ and USIC senior executive managers and personnel throughout the USIC, representing the FBI's security and counterintelligence interests related to a host of critical threat and national security matters…

> Todd traveled overseas extensively in support of this critically important mission. During Todd's distinguished FBI career, he was entrusted with some of our country's most sensitive and classified intelligence information and was called upon to provide testimony in Federal Court and Grand Juries, as well as being the affiant in Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court (FISC) proceedings.

What does such an individual see in the Democratic Party? And equally important, what does the Democratic Party see in him?

This list, however tedious—and hideous—is instructive. It gives a picture of the social elements that comprise a significant fraction of the Democratic Party. These candidates, drawn from the military-intelligence apparatus, demonstrate the real nature of this organization, a political instrument of Wall Street and the imperialist state.

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