

—Slug:.....COMM-0855.opin.view.cunningham-cook
—Contributor.....Matthew Cunningham-Cook
—Contributor email.....m.cunninghamcook@gmail.com
—For section.....Voices/Viewpoint
—Format.....Opinions
—Dateline.....San José, Costa Rica
—Article Number:.....43159

Notes from editor (not for publication):

Hi, Matthew — Obviously a lot has changed. I've tried to gently update the text now that we've crossed the Rubicon here, but of course let me know if you have other ideas. Your point about Vermont opportunities hit as a little bit of a non-sequitur, so I tried to integrate it into your big picture on line 64. Also, I updated the bio we used for one of your previous pieces — it's obviously out of date, it still might be, and I hope it won't be. Thanks so much for writing so eloquently about this moment, and I hope it goes without saying that I wish you didn't have to. May sanity prevail before it's too late. —All the best, Jeff

HEADLINE ELEMENTS:

####BEGIN HED####

1 Where has Bernie been?

####END HED####

####BEGIN SUBHED####

2 Our senior senator must lead a movement against
3 militarism and war — not just economic injustice

####END SUBHED####

4 TEXT BODY:

####BEGIN TEXT####

5 TODAY, the dogs of war are howling. Confronted by an
6 Epstein scandal spiraling out of control, Trump is letting his pit

7 bull Marco Rubio dictate foreign policy, most importantly against
8 Iran.

9 Twenty-three years after the U.S. made the disastrous
10 decision to invade Iraq, it has done the same again — this time,
11 against a far larger, more powerful, and strategically placed
12 country. The results are guaranteed to be cataclysmic.

13 But where has Bernie been on this, exactly?

14 * * *

15 OUR VERMONT SENATOR has been doing admirable work
16 campaigning for a wealth tax in California (it would be nice if he
17 was a bit more outspoken about the need for a wealth tax in the
18 state — John Abele should pay a lot more), but he has been
19 nowhere to be found in recent weeks on the pressing matter of
20 Trump’s dangerous escalation in Iran.

21 This, despite the fact that Sanders ran two transformative
22 campaigns for the presidency that received enormous support
23 around the country, in part because of his votes against the Iraq
24 War and the PATRIOT Act, legislation supported by both Joe
25 Biden and Hillary Clinton.

26 This is not to discount Sanders’ laudable work on arms
27 sales to Israel and the United Arab Emirates, but being the most
28 prominent senator in the country comes with certain
29 responsibilities: Only Congress has the power to declare war, per
30 the Constitution.

31 By not vocally working to stop the flow of business in the
32 Senate (withholding unanimous consent, putting holds on Trump
33 nominees) Bernie has unfortunately chosen to adopt a go-along-
34 to-get-along attitude over his constitutional responsibilities as a
35 member of Congress.

36 This is not unique to Bernie — it’s a problem for U.S.
37 Sen. Peter Welch and Rep. Becca Balint as well — but, again,
38 Bernie is the most well-known member of the Senate, bar none.

39 It’s time for Bernie to be far more vocal. He mentioned
40 Iran on Jan. 13, in response to the Trump threats then, and until
41 Feb. 28, when he posted briefly on X (“This Trump–Netanyahu

42 war is unconstitutional and violates international law," he said)
43 none of his public communications reference the topic. During
44 that time, the U.S. amassed in armada greater than any since the
45 2003 buildup to the war with Iraq.

46 * * *

47 EVERY MEMBER OF Congress who is concerned about this
48 administration must denounce this war with the force that the
49 situation deserves. It is an emergency.

50 Trump's attack on Iran is nakedly unconstitutional, the
51 legal opinions justifying it are hidden from public view, and it is a
52 transparent attempt by Trump to distract from the Epstein scandal.
53 Iran poses no threat to the U.S., which has the most powerful
54 military in human history.

55 The U.S., on the other hand, has used vicious sanctions
56 to starve Iranians, and then in June launched a decapitation
57 attack on the country's military, after earlier assassinating Iran's
58 top general in 2020.

59 Our country's long dependence on militarism and war
60 unfortunately pushed me and my family out of Vermont. Because
61 Americans spend nearly \$1 trillion annually on war and
62 militarism, we have failed to invest in affordable housing and
63 high-quality education.

64 On every level — from lost economic opportunities to
65 human life — the consequences are disastrous for Americans and
66 humanity as a whole.

67 In the first hours of the war on Feb. 28, three U.S. service
68 members died and five others seriously wounded. It is guaranteed
69 that more Americans will die.

70 * * *

71 WAR WITH IRAN would be the perfect pretext for the
72 Trump administration to deploy the Insurrection Act on national
73 security grounds, putting the U.S. at risk for martial law. Trump
74 has repeatedly stated that he would like to be a dictator. This now
75 can come to pass with the president's massive emergency
76 wartime powers.

77 In 2002 and 2003, Bernie courageously opposed the Iraq
78 War (even though he made an enormous mistake by being one of
79 very few heterodox members of Congress to vote for the Iraq
80 Liberation Act four years earlier).

81 Had more people listened, we would be a very different
82 country today. But at the time, there was no politician who was
83 vocally criticizing the war who had a major national platform.
84 That is very different today.

85 Bernie has an enormous bully pulpit. He must call for
86 nationwide nonviolent civil disobedience actions against this
87 violent and dangerous administration's war and mobilize mass
88 rallies against militarism. The difference is life or death.

####END TEXT####

BIO/COATTAIL:

####BEGIN BIO/COATTAIL####

89 **MATTHEW CUNNINGHAM-COOK** grew up in
90 Brattleboro and lives in Costa Rica with his family. An award-
91 winning investigative journalist and researcher, he is a writer and
92 researcher for the [Center for Media and Democracy](#). He has
93 written for *The Lever*, *The Intercept*, *The Nation*, *The American*
94 *Prospect*, *Al Jazeera*, and *In These Times*.

####END BIO/COATTAIL####

LAST ISSUE IN WHICH THIS FILE CAN BE RUN:

####BEGIN MAXISSUE####

95 0

####END MAXISSUE####

LINKS:

####BEGIN LINKS####

96

####END LINKS####

VIDEO:

####BEGIN VIDEO####

97

####END VIDEO####

LOGLINE (SOCIAL MEDIA):

####BEGIN LOGLINE####

98

####END LOGLINE####