

Democrats grovel as Trump pledges anti-immigrant attacks in White House meeting

By Eric London
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Following a meeting at the White House yesterday with Democratic and Republican leadership, the Democratic Party and the bourgeois press fawned as President Donald Trump advanced his far-right-wing proposals to crack down on immigration in the United States.

Trump repeated his previous position that he would be willing to consider extending the rights of 800,000 Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival (DACA) recipients in exchange for a massive militarization of the US-Mexico Border.

“We need a certain portion of that border to have the wall,” Trump said during the meeting, roughly half of which was televised. “If we don’t have it, you can never have security.”

The *New York Times* gushingly called Trump’s comments “a remarkable break with the divisive messaging that propelled Mr. Trump to the White House and the harsh policies that have defined his first year in office.” Trump and Democrats “appeared to produce some progress,” the paper said.

In reality, Trump repeated his fascistic anti-immigrant line. “Drugs are pouring into our country at a record pace and a lot of people are coming in that we can’t have,” Trump told the bipartisan group of congressional leaders.

First, he said, “We need a wall,” conceding that a wall would not be necessary in parts of the desert so inhospitable that those crossing will die trying. Second, Trump said any negotiated legislation “has to be a bill to end chain migration” which “is bringing in many, many people with one, and often it doesn’t work out very well. Those many people are not doing us right.”

Trump then cited a crime allegedly carried out by an undocumented immigrant who “ran over—killed eight people and many people injured badly. Loss of arms, loss of legs. Horrible thing happened, and then you look at the

chain of all the people that came in because of him. Terrible situation.”

Third, Trump called for eliminating the visa lottery system, claiming that countries are “not giving you their best names; common sense means they’re not giving you their best names. They’re giving you people that they don’t want.” Though these statements went unchallenged, they are patently false. Asylum seekers and desperate relatives make up the bulk of those applying for the visa lottery, and just 1 percent of applicants succeed in winning visas.

The Democratic response was worse than pathetic. They joked and laughed alongside Trump, who not 24 hours before had announced he was ending Temporary Protected Status (TPS) to over 250,000 Salvadoran immigrants.

The *Times* neglected to mention this decision as part of their claim that Trump broke with his “efforts to demonize and deport immigrants who have entered the country illegally.” Trump is preparing to deport Salvadorans who have lived in the US for more than two decades to one of the world’s most violent and impoverished countries where many will be killed as a result. No Democrat mentioned this in their remarks during the televised meeting.

“We’re all honored to be part of this conversation,” whimpered Senator Richard Durbin, Democratic Senate minority whip, adding “there are elements you’re going to find Democrats support when it comes to border security. We want a safe border in America, period, both when it comes to the issues of illegal migration, but also when it comes to drugs and all these other areas.”

Democratic Congressional minority whip Steny Hoyer added, “Democrats are for security at the borders; I want to state that emphatically. There is not a Democrat that is

not for having secure borders.” Hoyer told the president, “And then, because I think everybody around the table, as you pointed out, is for security—and then the issue is going to be how do we best effect that border security.”

Bernie Sanders, though not present at the meeting yesterday, declared Sunday: “I don’t think there’s anybody who disagrees that we need strong border security. If the president wants to work with us to make sure we have strong border security, let’s do that.”

Judging by the servile approach taken by the Democrats to Trump’s immigration program, one would have little idea that the Democrats are waging a daily press campaign to denounce Trump as a crazy idiot subject to removal under the 25th amendment. But such attacks are limited to when Trump’s conduct toward Russia is in question. When it comes to the mass deportation of hundreds of thousands of immigrants, the Democrats and Trump are in basic agreement. Toward the end of 2017, the Democrats voted two-to-one against considering articles to impeach Trump, in part, over his anti-immigrant campaign.

Increased “border security,” upon which both parties agree, means more drones, more agents, more barbed wire, more motion sensors, more floodlights, more barriers, more deportations, and more deaths in the US-Mexico borderlands.

Up to 27,000 people have died since 1994, when the Democratic Party implemented Operation Hold the Line and Operation Gatekeeper, militarizing the borders in El Paso and San Diego, respectively, and forcing immigrants to cross in the inhospitable deserts of the American southwest.

As for Trump’s attacks on “chain migration,” which none of the Democrats verbally opposed, these are working-class families who petition for husbands, wives, and relatives to enter the United States to unify their families and protect their loved ones from persecution at the hands of drug gangs and corrupt governments and police backed by US imperialism.

The alternative, a so-called “merit based” approach, means standardizing class-based discrimination and barring immigration to those without advanced degrees or white-collar employment contracts.

On the question of a border wall, Trump spoke some truth when he referred to the 2006 bipartisan Secure Fence Act, saying, “We also—as you know, it was passed in 2006—an essentially similar thing, which—a fence, a very substantial fence was passed. But, unfortunately, I don’t know, they never got it done. But they need it.”

Indeed, included among those who supported this bill to build a wall along the border were Senators Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton, Chuck Schumer, Joe Biden, Dianne Feinstein, and Barabara Boxer. Each is responsible for the lives of countless immigrants who have died attempting to escape poverty and violence in search of a better life. Today, the Democrats posture as opposed to a border wall in an effort to save face in front of a growing section of the Latino voting population.

Negotiations will continue through the week before the January 19 deadline for extending funding for the federal government. March 5 is the date the DACA recipients will be unable to reapply for the program. At the moment, it appears likely some type of deal will be reached on extending protections for DACA in order to provide Democrats with a fig leaf for the 2018 midterm elections.

The trade-offs Democrats will make to secure DACA protection will be disastrous for the estimated 12 million undocumented people living in the United States, as well as for the family members of those in their devastated home countries across Latin America, the Middle East, Africa, and Asia desperately seeking a way out of conditions of war, poverty and persecution.

An element of the negotiations is to split the immigrant populations against one another in an effort to block the development of a movement against deportations involving broader sections of the working class, both immigrant and US-born.

The Socialist Equality Party rejects the framework of this bipartisan bargain, in which 800,000 DACA recipients are treated like a bargaining chip to be traded away at the expense of Salvadoran TPS recipients, immigrants affected by Trump’s “Travel Ban 3.0,” or those future immigrants forced to travel through the desert. All immigrants have a right to travel freely throughout the world without fear of deportation or harassment.

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