

Trump administration adopts ruthless new immigration protocol

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The Trump administration officially adopted new immigration enforcement policies yesterday that place all undocumented immigrants living in the US at risk of deportation.

The new policies were outlined in Department of Homeland Security (DHS) memos leaked over the weekend. These memos were subjected to only minor changes before DHS Secretary John Kelly made them official on Monday.

Press Secretary Sean Spicer addressed the White House press corps Tuesday: "Everyone who is here illegally is subject to removal at any time," he said. Spicer explained that the DHS memos establish guidelines for those undocumented immigrants who are the first priority for deportation, a staggering one million people.

These immigrants have already been found removable in court and are subject to final orders of removal. The government will also target immigrants with any criminal record, as well as those who have supposedly "abused" public services (a very broad category that includes anyone who filed a false Social Security number or gave a false answer on an official document about their immigration status) and those who have been charged with or are suspected of committing a crime.

But Spicer explained that after the government expels the first million immigrants, agents will move in stages against the remaining population: "The president has made clear that when you have 12, 14, or 15 million [immigrants] here illegally, there has to be a system of priority." He added, "We are doing this one step at a time in a very methodical way."

The language of the memos confirms this. "Department personnel have full authority to arrest or apprehend an alien whom an immigration officer has probable cause to believe is in violation of the immigration laws," one memo said. "They also have full authority to initiate removal proceedings against any alien who is subject to

removal under any provision of the [Immigration and Nationality Act]."

Spicer's estimate that the Trump administration plans on ultimately deporting as many as 15 million immigrants nearly doubles an earlier estimate by the *Los Angeles Times* that 8 million were at risk. This much higher figure raises the specter that Trump will also seek to deport green-card holders, revoking their status as legal permanent residents.

Though the memos do not repeal Obama's executive order establishing the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, covering 750,000 immigrants who were brought to the US as children, the DHS notes that the issue will be addressed in the future. However, DACA enrollees who have been convicted or charged with a crime or who immigration officials believe may have committed a chargeable offense can be slated for removal. One DACA enrollee was arrested by Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents in Washington State last week.

"We will have more [orders]," Spicer said. "Immigration is one of those issues [Trump] was clear and consistent on throughout the campaign."

The *World Socialist Web Site* outlined the DHS memos in detail yesterday. The construction of new detention centers and a border wall, the hiring of 15,000 immigration and deportation officials, and the deputizing of local police agencies to detain and deport migrants will result in a significant police-state build-up in cities across the country.

"These memos lay out a detailed blueprint for the mass deportation of 11 million undocumented immigrants in America," Lynn Tramonte, deputy director of America's Voice Education Fund, told *USA Today*. "They fulfill the wish lists of the white nationalist and anti-immigrant movements and bring to life the worst of Donald Trump's campaign rhetoric."

The Trump administration is fearful that the memos will set off a wave of mass social protest. A DHS official told the press yesterday, “We do not need a sense of panic in the communities.”

Both Spicer and the DHS have sought to downplay risks that the government is going to immediately round up and incarcerate millions and millions of undocumented workers. At his press briefing Tuesday, Spicer explicitly disavowed a suggestion that the goal of the new Trump initiative was “mass deportation.” The DHS official said: “We do not have the personnel, time or resources to go into communities and round up people and do all kinds of mass throwing folks on buses.”

In other words, the Trump administration does plan on deporting millions, but to do so at once would be physically impossible and to announce it as a goal would be politically dangerous. The deportations will likely speed up, however, once sufficient police manpower has been mobilized and once a large network of detention centers has been constructed.

The DHS official also said, “We’re not creating anything out of the whole cloth.” The Trump administration’s attempts to hide the qualitatively different scale and depth of their anti-immigrant attacks are disingenuous and false. However, Trump’s immigrant program is an extension of the anti-immigrant policies of the Obama administration, which deported 2.7 million immigrants—more than all his predecessors combined.

The statutory framework used by Trump to deport over ten million undocumented people was established in a bipartisan effort. The Illegal Immigrant Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 would not have passed without the support of Democratic members of Congress and was signed into law by Democrat Bill Clinton. The Secure Fences Act of 2006, which Trump cites to justify his wall construction program, was supported by Senators Hillary Clinton, Obama, Biden, and Schumer.

Thirty seven of 48 Senate Democrats, including Democratic Senator Bernie Sanders, voted to confirm Secretary John Kelly—the signatory of the DHS memos—to head the DHS earlier this month. Sanders said he hoped Kelly would “have a moderating influence on some of the racist and xenophobic views that President Trump advocated throughout the campaign.”

Adopting the fraudulent “public safety” narrative of the Trump administration, Sanders told NBC News last week, “I think the vetting mechanisms are very, very strong. If there’s any way to make them stronger, let’s go forward.

I don’t think there is any debate that we want to keep the United States safe and we want to be 100 percent clear that anybody who comes into this country should not be coming into this country to do us harm.”

The claims by both parties that immigrants represent a threat to “public safety” or “national security” are fraudulent. The Trump administration seeks to scapegoat immigrants for a social crisis caused by the capitalist system, in an attempt to pit workers against one another and prevent them from fighting their real enemy: the ruling class.

No significant opposition to these measures will come from the Democratic Party. The phase-in of Trump’s deportation program will devastate the lives of millions of immigrants and their families, the overwhelming majority of whom are working class, and it is from the working class that opposition to these reactionary and xenophobic measures is emerging.

Immigrant and US-born workers must unite to mobilize against efforts by the Trump administration to deport their co-workers. Immigrants will receive no protection from the Democratic Party, from the trade unions who support Trump’s economic nationalism, or from hollow appeals to “change the minds” of the politicians. The right to live and work with full citizenship rights must be available to all workers, regardless of immigration status.

The working class must rely on its own social strength to defend these rights through the establishment of committees in workplaces, neighborhoods, and schools aimed at developing a political strategy for blocking deportations and prohibiting the government from removing immigrant workers from the country.



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