

Democrats seek to prop up Trump's crisis-ridden government

Joseph Kishore**15 September 2017**

Democratic Congressional leaders said Wednesday night that they had reached an agreement with the Trump administration on immigration policy. Senate Minority Leader Charles Schumer and House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi hailed the deal after their dinner with Trump, who has overseen a brutal escalation of the attack on immigrant workers and youth.

Schumer, evidently unaware that he was speaking into a live microphone on Thursday, revealed the sycophancy of the Democrats toward the billionaire president, boasting, "He likes us. He likes me, anyway."

As of yet, no concrete agreement has been announced, but press reports say the deal would preserve in some form the precarious status of some 800,000 young immigrants who are part of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, which the White House announced it was ending earlier this month.

Trump, whose account of the agreement varied throughout the day, indicated that he supported a measure to protect "Dreamers" from deportation, but not allow them citizenship, in exchange for a "massive" build-up and militarization of the US border.

Such a measure would be an extension of the anti-immigrant policy of the Obama administration, punctuated by some of the border militarization measures proposed by Trump. The *New York Times* cited a "senior Democratic official" who "said the agreement was specific, drawing on language from Mr. Trump's own budget request." The newspaper continued, "That request included sensors to beef up border monitoring, rebuilding roads along the border, drone and air support for border enforcement."

The DACA program, introduced by Obama in June of 2012, was in large part a maneuver in advance of that

year's presidential election designed to provide political cover for an administration that deported nearly 3 million immigrants during its eight years in office—a higher rate of deportations than that carried out to date by the Trump administration.

A 2013 measure backed by both Democrats and Republicans that is reportedly a model for the Trump-Schumer-Pelosi deal instructed federal officials to ensure that 90 percent of all unauthorized border-crossings resulted in arrest and deportation. The militarization of the US-Mexico border—Trump's "wall" in another form—has driven desperate migrants to take increasingly perilous paths into the country, leading to a sharp spike in deaths for those risking the journey.

Beyond immigration policy, there are broader political issues involved in the Democrats' embrace of Trump. The moves by the Democrats to solidarize themselves with Trump are aimed at stabilizing the government and the two-party system as a whole, the better to intensify the assault on the working class and prepare for a major war.

The Trump administration is in deep political crisis, internally divided and with an approval rating of just 35 percent. The catastrophes that have followed Hurricanes Harvey and Irma—including the horrific deaths of eight elderly residents of a Florida nursing home—are fueling social anger and exposing criminal levels of government neglect and indifference to the plight of the population.

From the first days of the administration nearly eight months ago, the Democrats' primary concern has been to contain, smother and redirect popular opposition to Trump, while the political establishment fights out conflicts focused largely on issues of foreign policy, particularly the demand of the military and intelligence

apparatus that Trump continue the policy of war threats and provocations against Russia.

The Democrats have always been willing to make a deal to escalate the attack on the working class, ensure a continued flow of cash to Wall Street, and intensify the assault on public education and health care—all of which were hallmarks of the Obama administration. As with last week’s agreement to raise the debt ceiling and fund the government, a central aim of the deal on immigration is to clear the path for the most important domestic agenda of the American ruling class: tax cuts for the rich.

The day before Trump broke bread with Pelosi and Schumer, he hosted a meeting with Democratic and Republican congressmen to discuss a deal on “tax reform,” i.e., slashing the tax rate for corporations. In the wake of the devastation wrought by Hurricanes Harvey and Irma, which will cost close to \$300 billion, Trump has sought to fast-track his tax proposals, and he has received an enthusiastic response from Democrats.

There are other possible areas of agreement, including trade war with China. The menu for the Schumer/Pelosi/Trump dinner, Chinese food (and chocolate pie), was reportedly an intentional reference to the anti-China economic measures supported by both Schumer and Trump. On health care, the “Medicare for all” bill presented this week by Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders is intended as a smokescreen for discussions between the two parties on new concessions to the insurance companies and major cuts to Medicare and Medicaid.

While foreign policy is not explicitly part of the Trump-Democratic Party deal, it is no doubt a significant, if not overriding, factor. In the wake of Trump’s praise of neo-Nazis involved in the rampage in Charlottesville, Democrats pushed for and then hailed the restructuring of the White House to place it more firmly in the hands of Wall Street and the generals and ex-generals who dominate the administration—Chief of Staff John Kelly, Defense Secretary James Mattis and National Security Advisor H. R. McMaster.

Even as Pelosi and Schumer enthuse over their newfound friendship with Trump, the United States is engaged in massive war games in Eastern Europe, targeting Russia. Mattis signaled last month that the Trump administration was planning on providing

Ukraine with lethal weapons, a central plank of the warmongering agenda of the Clinton election campaign. Democrats in Congress are currently working closely with Republicans, led by Senator John McCain, to push through a military authorization bill that will enormously increase spending on the US war machine.

In June, the *World Socialist Web Site* wrote that the bitter political struggle in Washington reflected sharp divisions within the ruling class, in which there was no progressive or democratic faction. “If Trump were removed from office by his opponents in the ‘deep state’ and the Democratic Party,” we said, “it would not represent a victory for democracy, let alone an improvement in the conditions of the working class.”

Any alliance between the Democrats and Trump would produce the same result, but in a different form. If they feel confident that foreign policy is in the hands of the military and intelligence apparatus, the Democrats are willing to make a deal with Trump on domestic policy, the better to contain and suppress social opposition.

Whether such a political realignment takes hold remains to be seen. However, what is clear is that the principal target of any agreement between the Trump administration and the Democrats is the working class.



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