

After Trump's racist outburst, Democrats plead for anti-immigrant "compromise" with White House

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Despite their expressions of shock and outrage over Trump's racist remarks during White House negotiations on immigration last week, the Democrats continue to plead for a reactionary compromise on immigration "reform."

On Thursday, in the midst of a closed-door meeting with Republican and Democratic lawmakers, Trump ranted against immigrants coming to the US from "shithole countries" such as Haiti and African nations, as opposed to countries like Norway. The remarks, leaked to the US press, sparked a wave of condemnation around the world. The following day the White House, clearly fearing mass demonstrations against the president, announced that Trump would not attend the opening of the new US embassy in London next month.

The protests by Democratic politicians over Trump's racist remarks are utterly hypocritical, given the Democratic Party's efforts to collaborate with the White House and Republican lawmakers in fashioning an overhaul in US immigration policy that will further militarize the border with Mexico, effectively end the program that grants protected status for hundreds of thousands immigrants from poor countries devastated by natural disasters or war, and impose curbs on legal immigration demanded by Trump.

The concern of the Democrats and major sections of the ruling class as a whole is that Trump's blunt expression of racist views is making it impossible for American imperialism to continue using rhetoric about democracy and human rights as a façade for its policies of war and plunder around the world.

Democratic Senate Whip Dick Durbin, who has been leading a group of Democratic senators in talks with

Republicans on a bipartisan plan, was at the White House meeting where Trump made his racist remarks. He said nothing until Friday, when Trump denied making the disparaging statements about Haitians and Africans.

Appearing on the ABC News program "This Week with George Stephanopoulos" on Sunday, Democratic Representative John Lewis of Georgia denounced Trump as a racist and said that in response to the president's remarks he would not attend his State of the Union address later this month. However, the only concrete measure he proposed was a vote of censure in the House of Representatives, which will, if initiated, almost certainly fail, given the lopsided majority of Republicans in the chamber.

Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, Trump's challenger in the 2016 elections, took to Twitter to denounce his "ignorant, racist views." Former Vice President Joe Biden also tweeted that Trump's remarks were "not what a president should believe."

Of course, the Democrats have long been well aware of Trump's fascistic views. That has not prevented them from seeking to reach reactionary deals on health care, taxes, immigration and a so-called "infrastructure" program. Many leading Democrats, including the nominally independent Bernie Sanders, have aligned themselves with Trump's economic nationalist and trade war policies.

Trump has made many similar statements in the past, including defending white supremacists as "very fine people" following a neo-Nazi rampage in August in Charlottesville, North Carolina that involved the murder of one anti-fascist protestor. He was previously cited for saying all Haitians have AIDS and talking

about Nigerians going “back to their mud huts.” He also spearheaded the racist “birther” campaign against Barack Obama, claiming that the former president was born outside the United States and therefore barred by the US Constitution from serving as president.

Lewis indicated in his interview that he would support the passage of a federal spending bill by the end of the week and avoid a federal shutdown if a deal could be cut with the president over the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Program (DACA), the Obama-era program that provides a temporary reprieve for some 800,000 undocumented immigrants brought to the US as children. Trump terminated the program last year, setting a March 6 date for the termination to take effect. The Democrats have sought to use the defense of DACA as a fig leaf for their own anti-immigrant policies and their eagerness to negotiate further anti-immigrant measures with Trump.

The Democratic position was best summed up Sunday morning on NBC News’ “Meet the Press” by Colorado Senator Michael Bennet, the brother of *New York Times* editorial page editor James Bennet, who feigned outrage over learning the president is a racist while stressing his readiness to cut a compromise deal with Trump and the Republicans.

“This is a trying time in the country,” he said. “But having said that, we need to work for the benefit of this country, its place in the world for the next generation of Americans. And this immigration compromise is a very good example of that.”

Trump has responded to the Democrats’ mixture of servility and phony outrage by doubling down on his right-wing demands. “DACA is probably dead because the Democrats don’t really want it, they just want to talk and take desperately needed money away from our Military,” Trump tweeted Sunday morning.

This was followed a short time later with a subtler reiteration of his racist remarks on Thursday. “I, as President, want people coming into our Country who are going to help us become strong and great again, people coming in through a system based on MERIT. No more Lotteries! #AMERICA FIRST,” Trump declared.

The plan presented to Trump on Thursday, agreed to between the Democrats and Republicans such as South Carolina Senator Lindsay Graham and Senator Jeff Flake of Arizona, includes \$2.5 billion for border

“security,” i.e., more border agents and cops, more drones, more fencing and walls, leading to more dead workers trying to flee poverty, drug wars and repression caused primarily by US interventions into their countries.

The deal, which Trump rejected, would give him most of what he has demanded. It would abolish the priority visa lottery, which allows a small number of people from poor nations in Africa, Asia and Latin America into the country. It would do away with family preferences, so-called “chain migration,” for DACA recipients, as well as the ability of all new US citizens to legally bring family members into the country. It would also cut off federal funding for so-called sanctuary cities, those municipalities that refuse to allow local police to serve as auxiliaries in Immigration and Customs Enforcement arrests and roundups of immigrants.

The plan would not reinstate the Temporary Protected Status program for Haitians, Salvadorans and others, but would add a certain number of slots for tens of thousands affected by Trump’s termination of the program. The discussion of this provision was apparently what set off Trump’s racist tirade.



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