

Pompeo meets with Mexican government as its police attack Honduran migrants

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Mexican federal police attacked and fired tear gas at a crowd of over 4,000 Honduran immigrants seeking entry to Mexico at its southern border with Guatemala yesterday. The migrant caravan left San Pedro de Sula, Honduras last Friday en route to the United States.

The decision by police to push back a crowd gathered on the narrow international bridge over the Suchiate River nearly provoked a stampede with potentially deadly consequences.

As it was, hundreds of women and children were injured and many youth jumped off the bridge in a desperate attempt to swim to the Mexican side. The massive crowd had just overrun a barrier set up by the Guatemalan government just south of the river.

Trump, meanwhile, escalated his threat to close the border and deploy the military to the US-Mexico border if Mexico does not stop the caravan with force.

“We’re calling up the military, not the guard, we’re calling up the military and we’re going to have the military stationed,” he said Friday afternoon. “They’re not coming into this country. They might as well turn back.”

Speaking at an Air Force Base before a rally in Phoenix, Arizona late Friday night, Trump called the caravan members criminals, spewing xenophobic rhetoric in a bid to boost turnout in the upcoming midterm elections among his base.

“They put all the women and children up front,” he said. “Do you think they’re giving us their finest? These countries are not stupid, they give us people they don’t want, and we need a wall.”

In response to a question as to whether the immigrants were criminals, Trump responded, “Oh please, don’t be a baby, take a look. Look at what’s happening...These are hardened criminals. These are tough, tough people and I don’t want them in our

country.”

At a press conference that took place amid Friday’s crackdown, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo issued a thinly veiled threat:

“President Trump’s been clear about the largest issue we face today. We are quickly reaching a point which appears to be a moment of crisis: record numbers of migrants. [Mexican Foreign] Secretary [Luis] Videgaray and I spoke about the importance of stopping this flow before it reaches the US border...If we can do this right we will improve the relations between our two countries materially as well.”

At Friday’s press conference, Videgaray praised Pompeo and the Trump administration, agreeing that Mexico “will have to apply the law” against the migrant caravan.

Mexican Interior Secretary Alfonso Navarrete denounced the caravan yesterday for trying to enter the country “with force” and “in a violent manner,” labeling the caravan’s request to enter the country “an atrocious act.” The Mexican government has pledged to deport those without papers, though it began letting a trickle of immigrants cross the border from Guatemala after Friday’s bridge standoff.

The migrant caravan, comprised mostly of workers and peasants, has galvanized broad popular support across Central America and Mexico. Residents of Mexican and Guatemalan border cities brought water and food to the Hondurans after yesterday’s police attack. The Mexican government’s crackdown on the Honduran caravan has been met with outrage by the Mexican people, the bulk of whom have family or friends who have immigrated to the US and faced similar repression from US immigration authorities.

Caravan participants are escaping brutal conditions of poverty and state violence, enforced by American

imperialism. In 2009, the Obama administration and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton instigated a coup d'état against the country's elected president, Manuel Zelaya, initiating a reign of terror that continues to this day.

Many immigrants have expressed the opinion that they would rather be killed traveling to the US than be forced to return to Honduras, a society in total collapse. Two thirds of the country lives in poverty, police regularly collaborate with drug cartels and the government operates death squads to assassinate dissidents. Despite this, the Trump administration ended temporary protected status for 57,000 Honduran immigrants in the US, putting them at risk of deportation.

The government enjoys close relations with Washington, which tripled funding to the Honduran police and military over the course of the Obama administration to over \$350 million per year. The US currently stations 500 to 600 troops at the Soto Cano Air Force base in the department of Comayagua. In the 1980s, the US operated the contra death squads employed in ethnic cleansing during the Nicaraguan Civil War out of Honduras.

"We are nervous but we are still joyful," a young immigrant told Telemundo yesterday as a Mexican police helicopter flew overhead. "We are good people, we are peaceful, but we need jobs. There are no jobs in Honduras,"

"We are men, we are all equal," another participant said. The crowd chanted: "We are not traffickers, we are immigrants (*no somos traficantes, somos inmigrantes!*)"

A 12-year-old boy named Mario David Castellanos Murillo was arrested by Mexican police on the international bridge yesterday after making the journey from Honduras by himself.

He has become an internet sensation in Honduras as a result of his bravery and good-natured speaking abilities. He previously told reporters he was traveling to the US to earn money for his epileptic mother as well as "because of the gangs, because of all the violence, because we had no money and if you work, the money you earn is what you are robbed of. I want to study and work." An image taken of his arrest went viral on social media Friday.

US workers must recognize these immigrants as their

brothers and allies in the fight against corporate exploitation and imperialist war. Together, they confront the same enemies: Wall Street, the American military-intelligence agencies that dominate the globe, and their corrupt puppets that run the governments of Latin America.

The fight for social equality means opening up the borders to allow the most exploited and oppressed to travel the planet as they please without fear of deportation or harassment.



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