

In vetoing bill to overturn national emergency, Trump makes fascist appeal

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On Friday, President Donald Trump vetoed legislation passed by Congress to overturn the national emergency he had declared on February 15, in which he directed military resources to be used for the building of a wall along the US-Mexico border.

The emergency declaration is an unprecedented assertion of unilateral executive power and an attack on the Constitution's framework of "separation of powers," which gives Congress the exclusive authority to appropriate public funds and provide the resources to carry out federal actions.

The significance of the veto was underscored by a statement Trump made to the far-right *Breitbart* website in an interview published on Wednesday. Denouncing the "left" for being "vicious," Trump declared, "I can tell you I have the support of the police, the support of the military, the support of the Bikers for Trump—I have the tough people, but they don't play it tough—until they go to a certain point, and then it would be very bad, very bad."

Trump's statement to *Breitbart* can be taken as nothing other than a threat and incitement to violence by his fascist base. Under conditions of protracted political crisis within the state apparatus and growing social unrest, Trump is following a fascist playbook. He is seeking to mobilize support outside of the normal constitutional and political channels and largely independent of both traditional big-business parties, basing himself on the military, police and far-right elements.

Trump has clearly welcomed the opportunity provided by the conflict over border wall funding to place himself in opposition to Congress, the Democratic Party and factions within his own Republican Party. He did nothing to avert the defection of 12 Republican senators, who joined all 47 Democrats on Thursday to pass the "resolution of disapproval" that had been passed last month by the Democratic-controlled House of Representatives.

Instead, Trump intervened personally on Wednesday to scuttle a compromise measure sponsored by Utah Republican Mike Lee that would have allowed the emergency declaration to stand in exchange for altering the 1976 National Emergencies Act to give Congress more oversight over future presidential emergency actions.

Acting with the knowledge that that the two-thirds vote in each house required to override a presidential veto will not be mustered, Trump is counting on the cowardice and complicity of the Democrats to advance his authoritarian agenda.

The appeal to violence has already had very real and tragic consequences. Trump posted a tweet linking to the *Breitbart* edition with his interview late Thursday, shortly after reports began to emerge of the massacre of Muslims at two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand, which has left 49 people dead.

In the early morning hours of Friday, as details of the scale of the massacre in New Zealand mounted, Trump deleted the tweet. Among the details was the fact that the suspect arrested in the shooting had published an online manifesto in which he praised Trump as a "symbol of renewed white identity."

While there exists today no mass base for fascism, Trump's efforts to create such a base must be taken as a serious warning to the working class. The "America First" movement of the 1930s that Trump seeks to evoke was pro-Nazi. Trump has, from his praise for the Charlottesville neo-Nazis, to his attacks on asylum seekers in the run-up to the 2018 elections as "invaders," to his incitements to violence against his political opponents, promoted right-wing, racist and anti-Semitic forces.

Among those encouraged by Trump's ravings was the fascist gunman who murdered 11 worshippers at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh last October. Both he and

the New Zealand murderer echoed Trump's rhetoric by referring to immigrants as "invaders."

Beginning with his State of the Union Address last month, Trump has directly invoked the central theme of fascism, hatred of socialism, identifying his 2020 reelection campaign with a global crusade against socialism.

Trump is not some exception or aberration. He is the embodiment of the putrefaction of American democracy and the criminality of the ruling corporate-financial oligarchy. This is the result of a decades-long process of decline of American capitalism, which is at the center of an unprecedented crisis of world capitalism.

Buffeted by insoluble economic contradictions, the growth of inter-imperialist and geopolitical conflicts, and, above all, the resurgence of the class struggle, the American ruling class, like its counterparts all over the world, feels itself besieged and threatened. It is alarmed by the spread of militant strikes and protests by workers in the US and around the world, and the growing support for socialism, particularly among young people.

That is why all over the world the ruling classes are turning to dictatorial methods of rule and bringing forward far-right and fascist forces: from Macron's embrace of the Nazis' wartime ally Petain in France, to the German grand coalition government's elevation of the fascist Alternative for Germany, to the installation of far-right governments in Italy, Poland, Hungary, Austria, India and Israel.

The defeat of fascism and defense of democratic rights in the US cannot be conducted through the Democratic Party. It has, no less than the Republicans, presided over the plundering of the economy to enrich the corporate elite as well as the carrying out of massive spying, unending war, internet censorship and the destruction of working-class jobs, living standards, education, health care and the environment.

The conflict within the state is a conflict within the ruling class, with the Democrats expressing the opposition to Trump of significant sections of the ruling elite and the military and intelligence apparatus, largely centered on foreign policy. At the same time, the Democrats are terrified of the growth of the class struggle and determined to avoid any actions that destabilize the state apparatus and encourage the growth of social opposition from below.

This explains the vacillation of the Democrats, from denunciations of Trump as a Russian agent and traitor to pleas for the president to work with them in a shared right-

wing agenda, including strengthening "border security."

When Trump first threatened in January to declare a national emergency to build his wall, during the 35-day government shutdown, the *New York Times*, which is closely allied with the Democratic Party, endorsed the proposal as a way out of the budget crisis. Democratic Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi urged Trump to declare a national emergency against gun violence.

Later, Pelosi shifted to denouncing Trump's declaration as "shredding the Constitution." Yet this week she declared that she was opposed to impeachment unless there was a "compelling and overwhelming" offense—as though upending the Constitution and establishing a presidential dictatorship does not constitute "high crimes and misdemeanors." She opposed impeachment, Pelosi said, because it was "divisive."

Not a single prominent Democratic official has called for Trump to be removed from office for usurping the powers of Congress and asserting dictatorial powers. The Democrats want to contain the struggle against Trump within the confines of a palace coup.

The working class must intervene into the political crisis as an independent revolutionary force, linking the defense of democratic rights to the struggle against war and social inequality. The entire history of the 20th century shows that there can be no successful struggle against fascism without a conscious political struggle against its source—capitalism.

That requires the establishment of the political independence of the working class from all of the parties and politicians of the ruling class and the forging of the international unity of workers in the struggle for world socialism.



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