

Trump visits border to step up attack on immigrants

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6 April 2019

At a staged media event in Calexico, California on the US-Mexico border, President Donald Trump on Friday reiterated his intention to build a border wall, defended his declaration of a national emergency to bypass Congress in funding the reactionary project, said he would deploy more troops to militarize the region, and called the attempts of refugees from Central America to gain asylum in the US “a scam.”

“They always say, ‘Oh, I fear for my life,’” he said contemptuously. “These are gang members... It’s a hoax and I know a thing or two about hoaxes.”

Flouting international asylum law, he declared, “The system is full. When it’s full, it’s full. You can’t take them.”

A 30-minute live-streamed “roundtable discussion” with immigration officials at the El Centro border patrol station was an exercise in fascistic immigrant-bashing. Trump lavished praise on the Border Patrol, largely composed of extreme-right uniformed thugs, while denouncing judges who to any degree upheld due process rights for immigrants.

In attendance was Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen, the commanding general of the Army Corps of Engineers, Todd Semonite, the president of the National Border Patrol Council, Brandon Judd, and several other national and local law enforcement and immigration officials. Also present were Republican congressmen and senators from California.

The event reflected the isolated and hated character of Trump and the border officials. They would not dare hold such a discussion in a more public forum, opting instead for what seemed to be the drab basement of a regional border patrol station. The small audience was entirely composed of hand-picked border patrol agents, who were celebrated as the “tip of the spear” on the “front lines” of the nation’s defense in the face of an

“invasion” by Central American workers.

General Semonite summed up the theme of patriot warriors holding off the invading hordes, declaring, “It’s important to talk about service to nation and protecting this country. They [the border patrol agents] protect America from within.” He promised that the army would operate on US soil to erect another 450 miles of border fencing by the end of 2020.

According to press reports, more than 100 people in the town of Calexico protested Trump’s visit. Protestors called their march the Binational March of Unity, and sympathizers on the Mexicali side of the border took pictures and greeted the protestors through gaps in the bollard fencing of the border wall. Protests also accompanied Trump upon his arrival in Los Angeles for a fund-raising event Friday night.

A March survey by the Pew research center reported that a majority of Americans, 59 percent, view immigration positively, versus 34 percent who view it as a burden.

Trump’s border visit took place amidst an ever escalating crackdown on undocumented immigrants. On Wednesday morning, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents raided an electronics manufacturing firm in Allen, Texas, arresting some 280 undocumented workers. The Texas raid followed a similar raid by ICE agents of meat packing plants in Ohio last year, leading to the arrest of 146 immigrant workers.

At Arizona State University earlier this week, two students were charged with misdemeanors for disrupting a campus presentation by the Border Patrol. The students denounced the border cops, calling them the “murder patrol” and “an extension of the KKK” before leaving the venue. The university administration said the arrests were necessary in light of Trump’s

threat to withhold federal funding from campuses that “fail to protect free speech.”

In February of this year, 77,000 people were detained attempting to cross the southern border, the most in any month since 2009. Most of those detained were from Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador, including many unaccompanied minors.

The administration is insisting there is a border “emergency” in order to justify an expansion of the already extensive network of immigrant prisons and detention centers, including facilities that house tens of thousands of immigrant children.

These attacks are being carried out with the complicity of the Democratic party. At the El Centro event, Trump remarked that the Democrats have provided him with all the funding he’s requested, with the exception of the border wall itself. He singled out for praise former Democratic Governor Jerry Brown, who deployed national guard troops to assist at the border before he left office.

Trump also offered praise for Mexico which, under the presidency of Andres Manual Lopez Obrador (AMLO), has acted as an auxiliary agent of the US Border Patrol. The country’s “Remain in Mexico” policy has forced asylum seekers to stay in Mexico until their cases can be heard. This ensures that they remain in squalid conditions for months or even years, thus acting as a deterrent against future asylum seekers.

This followed Trump’s threats to close the border or impose tariffs against auto products from Mexico unless the government of AMLO halted the flow of Central American immigrants through Mexico to the US border.



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