

After the Mueller statement

Trump to impose tariff on Mexico in attack on immigrants as Democrats denounce Russia

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Late yesterday, Donald Trump announced the US would impose a 5 percent tariff on all Mexican imports beginning June 10. He tweeted that the tariff would last “until such time as illegal migrants coming through Mexico, and into our Country, STOP,” adding, “The Tariff will gradually increase until the Illegal Immigration problem is remedied” at a rate of 5 percent per month for four months.

Stock futures declined dramatically on the news. Trump is responding to the political crisis embroiling the American ruling class by launching a renewed assault on immigrant workers.

Trump’s announcement came just over a day after former Special Counsel Robert Mueller effectively appealed to Congress to initiate impeachment proceedings against Trump. In his remarks delivered Wednesday morning, Mueller contradicted Trump’s claim that the report into allegations of Russian interference in US elections and obstruction of justice “exonerated” the president. Mueller said, “If we had confidence that the president clearly did not commit a crime, we would have said so.”

Trump accompanied his proposal to raise tariffs by pledging he would announce new anti-immigrant measures as early as today. Trump told the press he will make “a big league statement... having to do with the border and having to do with people illegally coming over the border and it will be my biggest statement so far on the border.”

The White House issued a fascistic statement from Trump that was likely written by the fascist-minded White House political advisor Stephen Miller:

“As everyone knows, the United States of America has been invaded by hundreds of thousands of people coming through Mexico and entering our country illegally. This

sustained influx of illegal aliens has profound consequences on every aspect of our national life—overwhelming our schools, overcrowding our hospitals, draining our welfare system, and causing untold amounts of crime.

“Gang members, smugglers, human traffickers, and illegal drugs and narcotics of all kinds are pouring across the Southern Border and directly into our communities. Thousands of innocent lives are taken every year as a result of this lawless chaos. It must end NOW!”

Administration officials also leaked to *Politico* yesterday plans to “choke off asylum to Central Americans.” Trump’s proposal “would deny asylum to thousands of migrants waiting just south of the border,” *Politico* wrote.

Last year, Trump and the Mexican government of President Andrés Manuel López Obrador agreed that Mexico would block Central American asylum seekers from entering the US on Trump’s behalf as part of the “remain in Mexico” program. Now that rotten deal has been exposed as a lie. Tens of thousands of Central Americans would become stranded far from home with no ability to exercise their right to asylum, which is guaranteed under international law.

New reports are also surfacing of massive amounts of immigrant children being illegally detained in jails along the US-Mexico border. According to a *Washington Post* report that broke yesterday, there are 2,000 unaccompanied children held “in overcrowded US Border Patrol facilities... beyond legally allowed time limits, including some who are 12 or younger.”

The Trump administration is engaged in flagrant violations of federal law, which requires children be released from detention within 72 hours. Roughly 1,000 unaccompanied children “are spending longer than a

week in Border Patrol stations and processing centers,” the *Post* wrote, while “more than 250 children 12 or younger have been in custody for an average of six days.” Children are suffering from chicken pox and respiratory diseases as a result of the deliberate government policy to make them suffer. Six children—five Guatemalans and a Salvadoran—have died in US custody since September.

The *Post* described conditions at one facility where “toddler children were packed into concrete holding cells, many of them sleeping head-to-foot on the floor.” Another cell “held adolescent boys, many of whom stood in the small space, peering out through a glass wall. One stood urinating behind the low wall that obscured the toilet in back. In the adjacent cell, several boys who appeared to be of elementary school age slept curled up on concrete benches, a few clutching Mylar emergency blankets.”

With these measures, Trump is making clear he will respond to threats of impeachment by whipping up fascistic sentiments and threatening extra-legal measures. Earlier this month, Trump threatened to cancel the 2020 elections and extend his term until 2022. He has also proposed turning traditional Washington DC independence day celebrations into a major rally of his supporters. His commencement address to the US Air Force Academy yesterday in Colorado Springs also had the air of a campaign rally, with the crowd of generals, officers and graduating cadets cheering his boasts about massive increases in military spending.

The Democratic Party opposition to Trump is not from the left and it blatantly ignores Trump’s ruthless attack on the rights of immigrant workers. Instead, the Democrats have focused their fire almost entirely on baseless allegations of Russian interference in US elections.

Explicitly referencing allegations against Russia, Hillary Clinton told a crowd of graduating seniors at Hunter College in New York Wednesday that “There may not be tanks in our streets, but make no mistake we are witnessing an assault on the rule of law and the foundation of our democracy.” Clinton said the Trump administration showed a “complete refusal to condemn a foreign power who attacked our democracy.”

Democratic Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi went a step further, denouncing the social media platform Facebook as “willing enablers of the Russian interference in our election” because they refused to censor an edited video shared by Trump which appeared to show Pelosi stammering while speaking. Trump posted the video in an effort to show Pelosi was mentally unfit.

Pelosi told KQED News in San Francisco, “We have said all along, ‘Poor Facebook, they were unwittingly exploited by the Russians.’ I think wittingly, because right now they are putting up something that they know is false. I think it’s wrong.”

Clinton also referenced the Facebook video of Pelosi in her Hunter College speech, saying “the video is sexist trash.” As students in the background rolled their eyes and appeared visibly bored, the 2016 Democratic presidential candidate denounced “the big social media platforms” who “know their systems are being manipulated by foreign and domestic actors to sow division, promote extremism and spread misinformation.”

As Trump prepares vicious and dangerous attacks on immigrant workers, the Democrats ignore these threats and instead make hysterical demands for censorship and a bellicose anti-Russian foreign policy based on false claims of “foreign meddling.”

The Democratic Party fears that an effort to impeach Trump could trigger tens of millions of workers to make their democratic, economic and social grievances known. As a result, they are determined to ensure the sole focus of any impeachment effort is based entirely on the neo-McCarthyite anti-Russia campaign. This is also the reason they are insisting that Mueller give public testimony before the Congress.

The working class has no ally in this faction fight between reactionary parties of US imperialism. Both Trump and the Democrats have competing strategies for establishing the geopolitical dominance of the American ruling class over the population of the world. Both plan to wage war, attack the democratic rights of the population and facilitate the super-exploitation of the working class by corporations at home and abroad.



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