Democrats exclude Trump's fascist anti-immigrant policies from impeachment inquiry

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According to a *New York Times* report posted Tuesday night, President Donald Trump in March called for a fascistic pogrom against immigrants crossing the US-Mexico border. "Privately, the president had often talked about fortifying a border wall with a water-filled trench, stocked with snakes or alligators, prompting aides to seek a cost estimate," the *Times* wrote.

"He wanted the wall electrified, with spikes on top that could pierce human flesh… later in a meeting, aides recalled, he suggested that they shoot migrants in the legs to slow them down."

On Wednesday, the *Times* reported that the Department of Homeland Security will forcibly collect DNA samples from all detained immigrants for compilation in a national database, including children and asylum applicants.

That such Hitlerian proposals are discussed in the Oval Office by the president and his chief advisers—down to the details of cost—testifies to the depraved character of the entire American political establishment and shows that Trump's immigration policies are calculated to abuse and terrorize immigrant workers.

Trump is the malignant product of a political system poisoned by decades of war, financial speculation and attacks on democratic rights. A country whose Declaration of Independence attacked the king of England for "obstructing the laws for naturalization of foreigners" and "refusing to pass others to encourage their migrations hither" is now led by would-be despots whose proposals for torturing asylum seekers would shock the conscience of people living in the Dark Ages.

Yet the Democratic Party has launched an impeachment inquiry not over Trump's fascist policies, but over his subordination of the global interests of US imperialism to his own personal and political needs. The Democrats are basing their impeachment drive on a single phone call in which Trump, having withheld some $400 million in military aid to the far-right government of Ukraine, an ally against Russia, sought to use the release of the funds as leverage to force the Ukrainian president to investigate the corruption of Democratic presidential contender Joe Biden and his son.

The Democrats' impeachment investigation is directed by the CIA and other intelligence agencies. These forces of extreme reaction have determined that Trump's *politics*—no matter how criminal—must be excluded from the efforts to remove him from office.

Accordingly, only hours after the *Times* published the report on Trump's proposal to shoot immigrants, the story had practically disappeared from the news cycle.

When House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and House Intelligence Committee Chairman Adam Schiff (both of whom have longstanding intelligence connections) held a press conference Wednesday to discuss the impeachment inquiry, neither Democratic leader made any reference to the *Times* report, nor did any reporter from the dozens of corporate media outlets ask a question related to it.

In her statement to the press, Pelosi said that aside from the threat to "national security" posed by Trump's phone call with Ukranian President Volodymyr Zelensky, "any other objections other people have to the president have no place in this investigation." She listed a number of excluded issues, one of them being Trump's immigration policy.

Invoking God and the military and wrapping herself in the flag, she declared: "Save that for the election. This is about the facts relating to the Constitution and that is how we proceed with dignity, with respect,

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prayerfully, worthy of the sacrifice of our founders, of our men and women in uniform who fight for our freedom."

As a legal matter, Trump's proposal to drown, shoot and sic snakes and alligators on refugees escaping countries devastated by American imperialist exploitation is the clearest violation of internationally guaranteed asylum rights and the proscription against "cruel and unusual punishment" laid down in the US Constitution's Bill of Rights.

The Democratic Party and its press organs have supported Trump's attack on immigrants, from the congressional Democrats' vote last January to provide $4 billion to fund Trump's crackdown on the border to Democratic Supreme Court justices' vote last month allowing Trump to bar Central American immigrants from applying for asylum.

Yesterday, the *Washington Post* published a glowing article featuring Acting Department of Homeland Security Director Kevin McAleenan. The *Post* described the architect of Trump's family separation policy as having "guided the United States out of a crisis at the southern border."

Last week, the *Times* echoed Trump's own declarations on executive power, claiming that with regards to "the environment, immigration, taxes, trade and other matters," Trump "had the absolute right to pursue his chosen course."

The decision by the Democratic Party, the corporate media and the intelligence agencies to exclude Trump's politics from the impeachment investigation serves multiple purposes.

The powerful faction of the ruling class backing impeachment fears that any investigation that addresses the democratic and social interests of the broad masses of working people could spiral out of control, provoking mass demonstrations like the ones that broke out spontaneously in January and February of 2017 after Trump attempted to impose his anti-Muslim travel ban.

The Democrats are increasingly concerned with "the specter of civil disorder," as Thomas Edsall wrote in a *New York Times* column yesterday titled "Will Trump Ever Leave Office?" While the *Times* frames the danger largely from the standpoint of Trump mobilizing his far-right base to take up arms, what Democrats fear even more is that such a fascist appeal would trigger an explosive popular response on the left.

If they succeed in removing Trump, the Democrats and the intelligence agencies have no intention of reversing his attacks on immigrants, his cuts to social programs, his tax cuts for the wealthy or his gutting of environmental and workplace safety regulations.

Pelosi made this clear in her press conference yesterday when she said that despite the impeachment inquiry, "we are trying to find common ground with the president" on economic policy and trade. Any government that follows Trump on such a basis will carry forward Trump's policies of social counterrevolution to feed Wall Street's profit bonanza.

Most importantly, the Democrats aim to use impeachment as a mechanism to carry out a bellicose shift in US foreign policy, aimed above all at countering Russia. It is for this reason that they have selected Ukraine as the battleground for their impeachment fight.

Concerned over Trump's erratic and personalist priorities and confronting debacle after debacle in Iraq, Syria, Iran, Afghanistan and North Africa, the inquiry indicates that major factions within ruling circles and the state have concluded that impeachment is the only way to protect the long-term interests of US imperialism.

Regardless of the outcome of the inquiry, the product of the process will be to shift the American political system even further to the right and pave the way for new and expanded imperialist wars.

The working class must oppose Trump, but not on the basis of the needs of the corporations and the intelligence agencies. Working class opposition to Trump must be based on addressing the social needs of working people in the US and internationally: ending the wars, redistributing the wealth, defending democratic rights and guaranteeing the right of immigrant workers to travel and live freely and without harassment. This requires the independent mobilization of the working class in a struggle against both big business parties and the capitalist system.

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