

Congressional leaders of both parties welcome members of neo-Nazi Azov Battalion to Washington

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Last month, leading members of both US political parties met with high-ranking soldiers of the neo-Nazi Azov Battalion at the Capitol in Washington D.C.

The week-long meetings in Washington with the fascist delegations, which were warmly greeted by Republican and Democratic politicians alike, have gone virtually unreported in the press.

In his posts first exposing the visit, journalist Moss Robeson revealed that one of the Azov soldiers who visited the Capitol was Giorgi Kuparashvili. Robeson wrote that Kuparashvili is a “a co-founder of the Azov Regiment and the leader of its Yevhen Konovalets Military School, named for the founder of the fascistic Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN).”

The Azov Battalion was founded in 2014 by white supremacist Andriy Biletsky. The organization is teeming with fascists and racists who idolize Stepan Bandera, a fascist who as leader of the OUN-B collaborated with the Waffen SS during World War II in carrying out the Holocaust in Ukraine.

The embrace of neo-Nazis in the Capitol by both big business parties obliterates any pretense that the US government is fighting for “democracy” or “human rights” in Ukraine, or anywhere else.

In publicly available Telegram posts, the Association of Families of Azovstal Defenders, an organization comprised of family members of Azov soldiers, boasted that Kateryna Prokopenko, Yuliya Fedosyuk and Alla Somilenko joined Azov soldiers Kuparashvili, Vladyslav Zhaivoronka and Artur Lypka in face-to-face meetings

with Democratic and Republican legislators alike.

Kateryna Prokopenko is the leader of the Association of Families of Azovstal Defenders and is the wife of Denys Prokopenko, an Azov commander. Yuliya Fedosyuk is the leader of an antifeminist group linked to Azov, according to Bellingcat journalist Oleksiy Kuzmenko.

The meetings are part of a US and global tour that is being conducted by the groups to build support in Washington and abroad for more direct military funding to the Ukrainian military, including the Azov Battalion.

Since 2018, Azov has been nominally barred from receiving direct funding and training from the US military. However, since the reactionary Russian invasion of Ukraine in February, the US government, with media partners, has embarked on a historical whitewash of the organization’s neo-Nazi past in order to reverse this ban in name only.

Beginning in a September 20 Telegram post, which continued throughout the week, the Association of Families of Azovstal Defenders wrote that its delegation and “Azov” soldiers met with “a number of American congressmen.”

In a September 20 photo, the fascists boast that they were met “at the Capitol” by Republican House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy (California) along with over 20 other representatives, both Republicans and Democrats.

In addition to McCarthy, Republican congressmen who met with the Azov fascists last month include Texas Republicans Dan Crenshaw, Pete Sessions, Tony Gonzales and Michael McCaul. McCaul is one of the

wealthiest members of Congress and the ranking member of the House Foreign Affairs committee.

Describing the warm reception they received on Capitol Hill, the Association of Families of Defenders of Azovstal said “the congressmen... in particular, veterans of the US Army, expressed their admiration for the victory of the ‘Azov’ regiment and declared full support for our ‘Azovstal’ defenders. They were especially interested in the topic of the defense of Mariupol...”

The posts noted that “in general,” the “American representatives... expressed their sincere support to our delegation and Ukraine as a whole and assured that they have no doubts about the victory of our country in this war, and also repeatedly emphasized their admiration for the heroic Azov regiment.”

On September 21, Senator Rick Scott, who just this past Sunday defended the ex-president against criticism over Trump’s declaration that Republican Senate Leader Mitch McConnell had a “DEATH WISH,” was photographed meeting with the delegation.

While she did not meet with Azov members in Washington, CIA Democrat Mikie Sherrill was photographed with members of Azov in her home district last month.

In Washington, Chair of the House Intelligence Committee Adam Schiff (California) was photographed with members of Azov and the Ukrainian military in the Capitol.

Michigan Democratic Representative Elissa Slotkin, another CIA Democrat, was not photographed with members of Azov, but did meet separately with another contingent of Ukrainian soldiers whose visit, not coincidentally, overlapped with that of the fascists.

This separate Ukrainian military contingent, as revealed in a Twitter thread by Daria Kaleniuk, an executive director at an “anticorruption” national government organization in Kyiv, met with several US senators over the exact same week that members of Azov were in Washington. The female Ukrainian soldiers were photographed with Dan Sullivan (Republican-Alaska), Shelley Moore Capito (Republican-West Virginia), Jeanne Shaheen (Democrat- New Hampshire) and Joni Ernst (Republican-Iowa).

This same delegation also met with Robin Dunnigan, deputy assistant secretary at the Bureau of European and Eurasian affairs at the US State Department.

A government profile of Dunnigan notes that she is a “career member of the Senior Foreign Service.” It adds that “she has served overseas in Vietnam, Chile, Turkey, Cuba and El Salvador.” Dunnigan has been a longtime opponent of the Nord Stream 2 pipeline, arguing at a 2015 conference that “Nord Stream 2 actually threatens not only Ukraine’s survivability and their resources, but it is a risk to fuel diversification in Europe, especially Southeastern Europe.”

After meeting in Washington with politicians, the Azov soldiers and the Defenders of Avozstal group have embarked on a multi-city tour to gin up support for Azov. Robeson reported that Azov commander Kuparshavili, speaking at a Ukrainian church in Detroit on September 24, recalled the reception the neo-Nazis received.

“We went to the senators, congressmen from both parties. Honestly, the majority we met, there were like over fifty of them, and head of their [factions], they all gave 100 percent support. They started to work right from their office in front of us, picked up the phone, and started calling to different organizations which can influence—right now...”

The open embrace of Azov by US politicians in both parties shows that the only “unity” that can be forged in Washington is based on war abroad with the most reactionary and genocidal forces in world history. It is a further confirmation that there exists no constituency within the US ruling class for the defense of basic democratic rights and underscores that capitalism has nothing to offer humanity except war and fascism.



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