

Trump administration preparing historic attack on immigrant workers and democratic rights

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27 December 2024

In a series of recent interviews, Donald Trump’s “border czar” Tom Homan has brought the incoming administration’s nightmarish mass deportation plans into focus. Despite the muted response among the Democratic Party and its allies in the corporate media, Homan’s statements make clear that the administration is planning a social crime of historic proportions.

Speaking to CNN last week, Homan said the administration’s immediate plans consist of constructing facilities with “at least 100,000 beds” to detain immigrants slated for deportation. This figure—nearly triple the current national detention capacity—will require the construction of a network of internment camps located throughout the country, though these will be built primarily in the uninhabitable Southwestern desert.

The military, Homan said, will initially be responsible for establishing the vast logistical network that will be required to carry out the administration’s plans. He mentioned that military transport planes will be used to fly immigrants out of the country, but transporting tens of thousands of families to tent cities in the desert will also likely require commissioning ground vehicles like busses and trains, with depots and “assembly centers” in major urban areas. Use of the military to engage in law enforcement activities beyond transport would require invoking the Insurrection Act or Alien Enemies Act, which would abolish *posse comitatus* and place the country under a form of martial law.

Homan also confirmed that the administration’s plan entails mass arrests of entire families, including US citizens. “We’re going to need to construct family facilities,” Homan told the *Washington Post* in an article published Thursday. Summarizing Homan’s comments, the *Post* reported that immigration authorities “will look to hold parents with children in ‘soft-sided’ tent

structures similar to those used by US border officials to handle immigration surges. The government will not hesitate to deport parents who are in the country illegally, even if they have young US-born children, he added, leaving it to those families to decide whether to exit together or be split up.”

Homan was asked by *NewsNation* what the incoming administration will do with the US citizen children of immigrants who remain in the country when their parents are deported. “They’re going to be put in a halfway house,” Homan said. There are 4.4 million citizen-children with at least one undocumented parent, and the proposal for the construction of a network of state-run child prisons/orphanages for masses of US citizen-children has gone almost without comment in the corporate media.

The closest historical parallel for such policies is the Japanese Internment, when the Democratic administration of Franklin Delano Roosevelt removed 120,000 Japanese immigrants and American citizens of Japanese descent from their homes and businesses and “relocated” them into a network of internment camps in isolated parts of the Southwest and Mountain West. Trump himself has also referred favorably to “Operation Wetback,” the 1954 military-style operation which resulted in the removal of an estimated 1 million Mexican immigrants, including thousands of US citizens.

But conditions at the tent cities that will house today’s targets will likely be even worse than the abysmal conditions in which World War Two internees were detained. According to a report on conditions in one smaller tent-based internment camp constructed in 2018:

The facility is made up of ten large tents, each of

which is designed to house 200 individuals. The tents are completely windowless and the lights are on around-the-clock, making it difficult for detainees to sleep. No partitions exist to separate the showers, toilets, sinks and eating areas, and detainees report that they are occasionally forced to eat with their hands because no utensils are provided. When detainees are permitted to go outside of the tents for recreation, they do not appear to be provided with warm weather clothing. Detainees who are sent to this remote facility near the southern border may have been transferred from places as far away as Boston, New York and Florida. As a result of the transfer, detainees are not only separated from their loved ones, but may also find it impossible to obtain legal representation.

The amount of money required to establish these camps and fill them with families will be astronomical. According to Homan, the initial price tag will be \$86 billion. “Congress needs to fund this deportation operation,” Homan told CNN. “It’s going to be expensive, and everybody is focused on how expensive it’s gonna be.”

This sum is more than four times the average annual federal expenditure on immigration enforcement over the past 20 years. It exposes the lie that the Trump administration’s attack on immigrants is aimed at improving the living standards of workers who live in the United States and happen to be citizens. Eighty-six billion dollars could be used to provide housing to every homeless person in the United States or to pay off the medical debt of some 10 million Americans.

Instead, Trump plans to direct resources away from the working class to terrorize immigrant workers and their citizen-family members. The impact of mass deportation on the non-immigrant population would be devastating. A report from the American Immigration Council estimates that removing 1 million immigrants would generate a GDP decline of between 4.2 and 6.8 percent.

The Democratic Party has responded to these plans by pledging to collaborate with Trump’s attack on immigrants. Earlier this month, the *New York Times* published an article titled, “Resist Trump? On immigration, top Democrats see room for compromise,” which noted that leading Democratic governors like Gavin Newsom (California), Kathy Hochul (New York)

and Phil Murphy (New Jersey) “showed a surprising willingness to work with” Trump. By the end of his term, Biden will have deported 1.6 million immigrants—slightly more than Trump did in his first term. Kamala Harris ran a right-wing campaign that touted her willingness to get “tough” at the border.

Trump’s plan is the spearhead of an assault on the democratic rights of the entire population. Immigrant workers comprise a critical section of the working class in the United States and make up either majorities or substantial minorities of the total labor force in agriculture, textiles, meatpacking, construction and hospitality. The defense of the rights of immigrant workers is a strategic necessity for workers of all nationalities and immigration statuses.

The American ruling class, reeling from one imperialist war to another, is attempting to introduce dictatorial methods of rule to tame the working class and subordinate every aspect of social and economic life to the needs of its war efforts. Taking a page from Hitler’s playbook, the administration aims to scapegoat immigrants for social ills and distract social anger away from the corporations and the capitalist system.

Homan and the incoming administration are keenly aware that the provocative policies will generate massive outrage within the population at large, including among many who voted for Trump. “We can’t lose the faith of the American people,” Homan told the *Washington Post* in a telling remark.

What both the Trump and Democratic factions of the American ruling class fear most of all is that opposition will emerge to defend immigrant workers and basic democratic rights, and that it will develop into a self-conscious movement based in the working class against imperialist war and the capitalist system. Those interested in building such a movement should join the Socialist Equality Party today.



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