

# Partial federal shutdown likely as Trump deploys troops, Democrats seek accommodation

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As the Trump administration escalated its conspiracy to establish a presidential-military dictatorship—deploying troops into American cities, branding political opposition as “domestic terrorism,” and summoning the military high command to an extraordinary meeting Tuesday—the Democratic Party met with Trump at the White House Monday for stage-managed “negotiations” over a looming partial shutdown of the federal government.

The Trump administration is seeking to use a government shutdown to carry out a sweeping restructuring of economic and political life in the United States, aimed at destroying social services like public education and federal health care programs. Last week, the Trump administration sent a memo to government agencies to “use this opportunity” to prepare permanent mass layoffs across “all employees in programs, projects, or activities.” Trump told NBC News on Sunday, “We are going to cut a lot of the people that... we’re able to cut on a permanent basis.”

After Monday’s meeting between Trump and the Democrats, both sides reported no progress. Trump and the Republicans refused to budge from their demand that Congress adopt a “continuing resolution,” drafted entirely by Republicans, to extend federal spending at current levels until November 21. Without passage of such a measure, spending authority will expire at the close of the fiscal year on September 30, triggering a partial shutdown.

Senate Majority Leader John Thune said that he would schedule a vote in the Senate Tuesday afternoon on the continuing resolution, which passed the Republican-controlled House of Representatives earlier this month. At this point, there is no indication that the

resolution will receive the 60 votes needed to overcome a Democratic filibuster.

The Republicans hold a 53-47 majority in the Senate, but two Republicans, Rand Paul of Kentucky and Lisa Murkowski of Alaska, have said they will vote against the continuing resolution, for opposite reasons: Murkowski because it cuts too much, Paul because he wants even bigger cuts. Only one Democrat, John Fetterman of Pennsylvania, has suggested he will vote for the resolution.

The White House meeting reportedly consisted of posturing on both sides, with the Republicans claiming that they were advancing a “clean” continuing resolution, i.e., one without extraneous right-wing provisions on social issues, typically proposed by the Republicans when the Democrats control Congress and the White House.

The Democrats maintained their pretense of “fighting” for health care, demanding that the continuing resolution rescind cuts in Medicaid funding pushed through by the Republicans during the summer, and restore subsidies to purchase private insurance under the Affordable Care Act, which the Republicans would allow to expire at the end of this year.

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer and House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries, both of New York, made no political demands on the Trump administration, refusing to raise the issue of Trump’s ordering federal troops into Democratic-controlled cities like Los Angeles, Washington D.C., Portland, Memphis and Chicago.

That the Democrats even agreed to sit down with Trump under these conditions is itself an extraordinary act of political bankruptcy. Trump aid Stephen Miller

recently referred to the Democratic Party as a “domestic extremist organization,” part of moves by the government to criminalize all political opposition to the fascistic regime.

Nor did the Democrats suggest that Trump was deliberately seeking a shutdown because it would give him a free hand to decide what portions of the federal government should be closed as “nonessential” and which should remain open. This would facilitate his efforts to permanently shut down such agencies as the Department of Education, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau and the Chemical Safety Board, as well as large portions of the departments of Labor, Interior, Commerce, Transportation and Health and Human Services.

The White House is planning a massive assault on the working class, including the destruction of tens of thousands of federal worker jobs. Over the weekend, the Office of Personnel Management issued a detailed 70-page guideline for handling a possible shutdown, including designating those federal workers responsible for carrying out permanent layoffs as “essential employees” so that job destruction can go forward at full speed even during the partial closure.

The core functions of the capitalist state, including the US military, the US intelligence apparatus, the Department of Homeland Security, which includes immigration and border agents, and police forces like the FBI, will all continue operating unimpaired, although some civilian workers at the Pentagon are likely to be laid off.

Even as the White House shreds the Constitution and moves to entrench a presidential dictatorship, the Democrats continue to seek some form of accommodation with Trump. After the two-hour White House meeting, Schumer told the press that Trump “seemed to understand for the first time the magnitude of this crisis.”

Sections of the congressional Democrats are already floating suggestions for a possible “compromise,” i.e., outright capitulation, to the Trump administration demands. The senior Democrat on the House Ways and Means Committee, Richard Neal, said he was open to negotiating income limits on the health care subsidies.

Republican leaders in both the White House and Congress flatly refused to consider any policy measures being incorporated into the continuing resolution,

denouncing the Democratic demands as “hostage-taking.” They suggested that the healthcare subsidies can be discussed later, after the continuing resolution is passed.

Meanwhile, ultra-right Republicans in the House declared that they would reverse themselves and vote against the continuing resolution if any concessions were made to the Democrats on healthcare subsidies. The resolution passed by only a handful of votes, so the defection of the ultra-right bloc would ensure the defeat of an amended resolution.

The entire shutdown “drama” is exactly that: a stage-managed affair, aimed at distracting public attention from the increasingly authoritarian actions taken by the Trump administration, particularly the deployment of heavily armed federal agents and federal troops in many cities, on the pretext either of “fighting crime” or enforcing anti-immigrant laws.

Schumer and other Democratic leaders decided to oppose the continuing resolution in an effort to foster illusions that the Democratic Party is seriously opposing the Trump administration, after Schumer’s own decision last March to support an earlier continuing resolution provoked widespread scorn and contempt among Democratic voters. The party’s standing in the polls has plunged, and it currently trails even Trump in favorability, with both under 40 percent. These figures demonstrate the deep alienation of vast sections of the working class and youth from both corporate-controlled parties.

The entire spectacle of the shutdown negotiations, carried out against the backdrop of troop deployments to American cities and preparations for mass layoffs of federal workers, underscores the depth of the political breakdown in the United States. With Trump pressing forward in his drive to establish a presidential dictatorship, and the Democrats responding with appeals for “negotiation” and “compromise,” the reality confronting millions of workers and youth is a ruling class united on the essentials.



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