

“We can’t take care of daycare ... We are fighting wars”

# Trump says workers must pay for imperialist war with cuts to Medicare, Medicaid and daycare

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Speaking at a closed Easter lunch at the White House on Wednesday, US President Donald Trump declared that the federal government should stop paying for daycare, Medicare and Medicaid, all of which, he indicated, must be sacrificed for imperialist war.

“Don’t send any money for daycare,” Trump said, because “we’re fighting wars.” He went on, “You gotta let states take care of daycare and they should pay for it too ... Medicaid, Medicare, all these individual things,” insisting that Washington had to concern itself with only “one thing, military protection.”

He added that the federal government’s role was to “guard the country,” before dismissing Social Security, which serves more than 70 million people; Medicare, which covers about 68 million; and Medicaid and CHIP (the Children’s Health Insurance Program), which together cover more than 75 million people, including about 36 million children, as “little scams.”

The remarks, delivered in a setting where Trump evidently felt free to speak more openly than usual, were a blunt threat against programs on which millions of workers and their family members depend. Capitalist politicians generally avoid such direct attacks on Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security because these programs remain deeply embedded in the lives of working people who have paid into them for decades. Trump, however, stated with unusual candor the real priorities of the ruling class.

The significance of the remarks lies not only in their content but in the circumstances under which they were made. The Easter lunch was closed to the press, and video of the event was briefly posted by the White House and then deleted. In contrast to Trump’s later scripted primetime address on Iran, the lunch exposed a more direct statement of policy: Social spending is to be gutted, while war spending is treated as the only indispensable function of the state.

Bloomberg reported Thursday morning that Trump is preparing to release a Fiscal Year 2027 budget plan on Friday centered on a “massive defense buildup, partially paid for by cuts to domestic agencies.” The administration, which is demanding \$200 billion for the current illegal war on Iran, is also advancing a \$1.5 trillion

defense budget proposal for FY2027, up from the roughly \$1 trillion level reached last year.

Trump’s remarks confirm in the most brazen possible way the Marxist analysis of the state. The capitalist state is not a neutral institution standing above society. It is an instrument of class rule, defending the interests of the financial oligarchy at home and imperialist predation abroad. Under conditions of intensifying global war, deepening economic crisis and a national debt that has now passed \$39 trillion, the ruling class is seeking to offload the burden onto the working class through cuts to healthcare, childcare and every other social program, while funneling ever larger sums into the military and domestic police forces, including Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Customs and Border Protection (CBP).

Trump’s attacks on social spending followed his latest racist salvo directed against Somali Americans and immigrants. At the same event he declared, “Somalia is just terrible,” describing it as “the worst country anywhere in the world,” and saying Somalis were “low IQ people,” adding, “I can generalize.” He tied these slanders to his denunciations of daycare spending, autism funding and supposed “fraud,” while also demonizing Los Angeles and the state of Maine.

Trump’s racist attacks, a component of the “mass deportation” operation, are made to divide workers along racial and national lines so that the financial oligarchy can loot the wealth of society while he establishes a dictatorship to protect himself and his fellow billionaires. Trump’s attacks on immigrants and his racist lies are the pretext for establishing a police state, while slashing programs relied on by all workers and their families, regardless of immigration status.

None of the reactionary political and religious figures assembled at the luncheon objected to this open racism. The event instead proceeded seamlessly from Trump’s filthy denunciations of immigrants to his blunt description of the predatory aims of US imperialism. Speaking about Venezuela and Iran, Trump boasted, “We could just take their oil,” later adding, “We’re controlling now 59 percent of the oil in the world,” a line that drew applause from the assembled guests.

The remarks stripped away the propaganda that the US wages war for “democracy,” “human rights” or the liberation of women. Trump said plainly what American imperialism is after: resources, strategic domination and profit.

The composition of the gathering underscored its fascist political character. Vice President JD Vance was present, as were right-wing religious figures including Franklin Graham and Paula White, along with Erika Kirk, the widow of fascist Turning Point USA founder Charlie Kirk. Trump singled her out repeatedly, thanking “Charlie and Erika.” Turning Point USA is continuing to host events following the assassination of its racist founder on college campuses with Trump administration officials.

After Trump’s remarks, Paula White-Cain, Trump’s “spiritual adviser” and a televangelist, led prayers over Trump in language that cast him in a Christ-like martyr role. “Jesus taught us so many lessons,” she said, before telling Trump, “No one has paid the price like you have paid the price.

“God always had a plan. On the third day he rose, he defeated evil, he conquered death, hell and the grave, and because he rose, we all know that we can rise. And sir, because of his resurrection, you rose up because he was victorious, you were victorious. And I believe that the Lord said to tell you this, because of his victory, you will be victorious in all you put your hands to,” she added.

Catholic Bishop Robert Barron, also in attendance, appeared to clap after White-Cain’s comments.

White-Cain has been politically close to Trump for years. At the Easter lunch her function, along with that of the other Christian nationalist charlatans, was to use religious imagery to glorify the president, binding Christian fundamentalism ever more openly to the capitalist state.

Franklin Graham’s prayer was even more explicit. Invoking the Book of Esther, Graham said “the Persians, the Iranians” wanted “to kill every Jew” and “destroy them with an atomic fire.” Graham’s rhetoric erased the fact that Israel is the only state in the Middle East with a nuclear arsenal.

The embrace of Christian nationalism extends well beyond the White House Easter lunch. Secretary of War Pete Hegseth has used official events to insist that America is a Christian nation “in our DNA.” He has made Pentagon prayer services, where he prays for “overwhelming violence” against America’s enemies, into a regular feature of the top leadership of the US war machine.

The elevation of Christianity as state doctrine goes hand in hand with attacks on Muslims, immigrants and political opposition. It is a central ideological component of the turn toward dictatorship.

The infusion of Christian nationalism into the state is part of the ruling class’s turn away from science, reason and the Enlightenment, and toward the Dark Ages. While Trump and Hegseth threaten to bomb Iran into the “Stone Age,” it is the American ruling class and its financial oligarchy that are dragging humanity toward the abyss of barbarism.

The Democratic Party has responded with its typical cowardice and complicity. Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer attacked Trump’s Iran policy not as an illegal war or a war crime but as “one of the greatest policy blunders in the history of our country,”

complaining that Trump had failed to “articulate objectives” or address “kitchen table problems.” The Democrats, a party of Wall Street and the CIA, object not to imperialist war itself but to its management by Trump which they fear will provoke a mass response from below.

Whatever their occasional squawking, the fact is that the Democrats provided the funding that has allowed Trump to wage an illegal war against Iran. The financial mechanism for the assault was prepared in advance through the bipartisan military aid structure built around Israel. Funds made available under the Israel Security Supplemental Appropriations Act were reprogrammed for the replacement of weapons expended in combat operations carried out “at the request of and in coordination with Israel,” including munitions used in Operation Midnight Hammer, the assault on Iran last summer.

In other words, the war against Iran is already being retroactively financed through the military appropriations framework backed by the Democratic Party under Biden. The war machine on which Trump relies is funded on a bipartisan basis.

The fight to preserve social programs for workers and end US imperialism cannot be left to the Democratic Party. The Democrats have worked with the Republicans to create this situation and continue to fund the state apparatus that wages war abroad and prepares austerity and repression at home. The way forward is the intervention of the working class, the social force that produces society’s wealth and the only revolutionary class in capitalist society.

Workers in the United States, Iran and throughout the world have no interest in being driven into war against one another while housing, healthcare, education and childcare are slashed. The fight to direct the wealth created by society toward the needs of all requires a socialist and anti-capitalist perspective, since there can be no serious struggle against war except through the fight to end the dictatorship of the oligarchy and its economic system, which is the fundamental source of war.



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