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By Eric London

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Democrats, Mexican president collaborate with Trump's anti-immigrant crackdown

The Friday agreement between the governments of the US and Mexico to lock down Mexico's southern border with Guatemala is an illegal attack on the right to asylum and an effort by US imperialism to further militarize the Central American region.

Under the deal, the government of Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador will continue to collaborate with the Trump administration by forcing Central Americans caught crossing into the US to remain in Mexico while they await their US asylum hearings. Mexico will also deploy 6,000 National Guard members on Monday along the southern border with Guatemala, and it will block passage across the entire border as opposed to at points of entry only.

As a result of the deal, untold numbers of impoverished people from Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador will be murdered, tortured and persecuted by the government or gangs operating with impunity.

As news of the deal broke, the *Washington Post* reported that the US government will begin housing 3,000 to 4,000 immigrant children at internment camps on military bases. Malmstrom Air Force Base in Montana, Fort Sill Army Base in Oklahoma and Fort Benning Army Base in Georgia are all under consideration. The *Washington Post* wrote that these thousands of children “will not have the educational programming or recreational activities that are normally required in child centers.”

There is practically no opposition to the deal or the Trump administration's attack on immigrants among the factions of the ruling class in either the US or Mexico.

Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador (known by the acronym AMLO) held a rally in the northwest Mexican city of Tijuana Saturday alongside governors and leaders of the various business federations.

"I'm not raising a closed fist, rather an open and direct hand to President Donald Trump," AMLO told the crowd during the rally for "national dignity." During his nationally televised speech, AMLO repeatedly appealed for national unity and thanked "all the social classes" for supporting the Mexican nation.

In fact, masses of Mexican people, including millions with relatives living in the US under fear of persecution, are deeply opposed to transforming the newly formed Mexican National Guard into the foreign legion of the US Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

Mexico's Foreign Secretary Marcelo Ebrard, whom AMLO dispatched immediately to Washington to calm Mexican corporations when Trump made the tariff threat earlier this month, acknowledged this opposition when addressing the crowd in Tijuana yesterday. "We didn't win everything, but we were able to claim a victory with there being no tariffs," he said.

In the US, the Democratic Party responded to the agreement by ignoring the historically unprecedented attack on the right to asylum. Instead, Democrats criticized Trump's belligerent threats for their unpredictability and damage to US foreign policy interests.

"Think about how much events like the Mexican standoff weaken America's position in the world," Paul Krugman wrote in yesterday's *New York Times*.

Krugman criticized the re-negotiated North American trade agreement as "barely different from the previous deal," adding, "the whole point of trade deals is that they're supposed to provide some certainty." By threatening to impose new tariffs this month "because he didn't like something that was happening on the border," Trump was undercutting the standing of American foreign policy.

"If that's what you get out of making a deal with America, why bother?" Krugman wrote. "The bottom line from the Mexico fiasco is that the US is now significantly less credible and less respected than it was a few weeks ago. And things will probably keep getting worse."

While Democratic candidates and columnists denounce Trump for undermining imperialist foreign policy, hardly a word is spoken about the ongoing horrors being perpetrated by the US government in detention facilities and the desert no man's land of the border region.

A day after reporting on plans for mass child detention, the *Washington Post* published an editorial board statement calling for renewed attacks on the rights of immigrants.

Swallowing whole the Trump administration's fascistic claim that refugees fleeing violence are using their children as pawns, the *Post* wrote:

"A concatenation of court rulings, congressional inaction and administration failures has created a perverse incentive for migrants to cross the border with children. They claim asylum; a swamped court system postpones their case for years; the government does not have the facilities or the legal right to hold them; so they are 'paroled' into the United States for an extended period. Most of the asylum claims eventually are denied."

The *Post* calls for a system that would deny applications "quickly" so that "word would get out and fewer families would come." The *Post* demands the government "strengthen the border regime" and "impose real penalties on employers who hire undocumented immigrants."

On June 4, Yahoo News exposed the fact that CBP officers are systematically taking life-saving medication away from immigrants when they are detained. The report cited five volunteer doctors who "regularly see migrants with chronic conditions like diabetes, asthma, seizures and high blood pressure, for which they claim to have had medication that was confiscated while they were in custody of US Customs and Border Protection and neither returned nor replaced."

NBC News reported yesterday that 24 immigrants have died in the custody of ICE or Customs and Border Protection since Trump took office. This figure does not include the six children who have died in child detention centers. In comparison with the corporate media and Democratic Party's obsession with claims that Trump is aiding Russia, such crimes against humanity are downplayed or outright ignored.

Katharina Obser, an immigrant rights activist, told NBC: "What we're seeing is a reckless and unprecedented expansion of a system that is punitive, harmful and costly. The US government is not even doing the bare minimum to ensure [immigrants] are getting the medical care and the mental health care they need."

NBC cited the death of Kamyar Samimi, a 64-year-old Iranian man living in the US since 1976. US officials allowed him to die in 2017 in an immigration detention facility in Aurora, Colorado. The NBC report reads:

“As Samimi grew worse, he began collapsing, vomiting and screaming out for help. Nurses told officers that they believed Samimi was faking his symptoms. Early one morning, after a severe nosebleed, Samimi asked for ice water. A nurse told him ‘he could drink water [from the sink] like everyone else.’ The majority of nursing staff told investigators they ‘did not see an urgent need’ to notify the doctor of his deteriorating health.

“Nursing staff told investigators that they were often unable to reach the facility’s sole physician...The physician never physically examined Samimi. According to his interview with investigators, he only looked at Samimi through a cell door. The doctor said ‘he believed the detainee engaged in behavior to get what he wanted,’ according to the report, and that Samimi’s fainting spells were ‘not legitimate.’”

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