



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on February 7, 2018

Trump Favors Shutting Down Government if Borders Not Secured

During a law-enforcement roundtable held at the White House cabinet room on February 6 to discuss MS-13 — which President Trump accurately described as “one of the most violent and vicious gangs anywhere in the world” — the president twice indicated he favored having a government shutdown, if that was the price to pay to achieve legislation that would secure our borders.



Before doing so, Trump stated: “As Congress considers immigration reform, it’s essential that we listen to the law enforcement professionals in this room today.”

Trump acknowledged attendees Representatives Robert Goodlatte (R-Va.), the chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, and Martha McSally (R-Ariz.), whom, he said, have worked with him to introduce a bill to achieve the four pillars of border security he mentioned during his recent State of the Union address.

He went on to say that he talks to Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen, and she tells him, “I don’t have the authority to deport these dangerous criminals. I’ve been down to the detention spaces, I’ve seen these teenage males that their home becomes MS-13. That becomes their family. And then they’re a threat to our society.”

He told those attending the roundtable, “We want to give the Secretary that authority to end and close the dangerous loopholes so we can deport and remove these dangerous criminals from the United States.”

The president continued:

So, as you know, we can’t do a job — these incredible professionals at the table cannot do their job unless we change, really, the legislation. And we’re going to get it done.

Frankly — I’ll go a step further — if we don’t change the legislation, if we don’t rid of these loopholes where killers are allowed to come into our country and continue to kill — gang members. And we’re just talking about MS-13. There are many gang members that we don’t even mention. If we don’t change it, let’s have a shutdown. We’ll do a shutdown. And it’s worth it for our country. I’d love to see a shutdown if we don’t get this stuff taken care of.

So we have to strengthen our borders, not by a little bit but by a lot. We are so far behind the time. And, by the way, the world is laughing at us because they can’t believe these policies. They don’t have it. I could name 15 of them right now. No other country in the world has what we have. And we’re going to get it stopped.

And if we have to shut it down because the Democrats don’t want safety and — unrelated but still related — they don’t want to take care of our military, then shut it down. We’ll go with another shutdown.



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At the very end of the roundtable discussion, an unidentified individual asked Trump, “Sir, do you get the sense that there will be a shutdown given the differences over this issue?”

Trump replied:

I would shut it down over this issue. I can’t speak for everybody at the table, but I will tell you, I would shut it down over this issue. If we don’t straighten out our border, we don’t have a country. Without borders, we don’t have a country.

So would I shut it down over this issue? Yes. I can’t speak for our great representatives here, but I have a feeling they may agree with me. Okay? Thank you.

A February 6 *New York Times* report on the White House meeting expressed the view that “Trump’s comments, though combative, had little to do with the delicate negotiations on Capitol Hill to keep the government open past Thursday, a fact that appeared to elude Mr. Trump.”

The *Times* reported that Republicans and Democrats in the Senate were progressing toward a deal to raise statutory spending caps on military and nonmilitary spending. That deal, if agreed to, could secure a major, two-year spending bill before the government is set to shut down on Friday.

“We are closer to an agreement than we have ever been,” Senator Chuck Schumer of New York, the Democratic leader, said, referring to the negotiations over raising the spending caps.

The report noted that Schumer paid a visit to the office of Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) on February 6. However, Schumer revealed very little about what the two Senate leaders discussed, telling reporters only that it was a “good meeting.”

A February 7 AP report said that McConnell had just announced that there has been a Senate agreement on a two-year, almost \$400 billion budget deal that would provide both military and domestic programs with massive spending increases.

McConnell was joined on the Senate floor by Schumer in announcing the agreement. It would authorize spending almost \$300 billion over current limits on defense and domestic accounts. The Republican leaders said the measure would rewrite existing defense limits that have “hamstrung our armed forces and jeopardized our national security.”

The report also cited House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, who said she and many fellow Democrats will oppose the expected bipartisan budget deal unless Republicans allow the chamber to vote on legislation protecting immigrants.

Pelosi said on the House floor that because House Speaker Paul Ryan has yet to promise an immigration vote, the emerging budget pact “does not have my support, nor does it have the support of a large number of members of our caucus.”

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