

General Wesley Clark calls for putting “disloyal” Americans in internment camps

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Retired US Army General Wesley Clark called for the internment of persons deemed “disloyal” to the United States government in an interview with MSNBC last Friday.

Warning of the threat posed by “lone wolf” attacks similar to last week’s mass shooting in Chattanooga, Tennessee, Clark advocated stepped-up surveillance of US communities and pre-emptive detention of persons suspected of ideological or political opposition to US government policies.

“We have got to identify the people who are most likely to be radicalized. We’ve got to cut this off at the beginning,” Clark said.

“On a national policy level, we need to look at what self-radicalization means, because we are at war with this group of terrorists,” the former top military commander added. “They do have an ideology. In World War II, if someone supported Nazi Germany at the expense of the United States, we didn’t say that was freedom of speech, we put him in a camp, they were prisoners of war.”

He continued: “If these people are radicalized and they don’t support the United States and they are disloyal to the United States, as a matter of principle, fine. It’s their right, and it’s our right and obligation to segregate them from the normal community for the duration of the conflict.

“And I think we’re going to have to increasingly get tough on this, not only in the United States, but our allied nations like Britain, Germany and France are going to have to look at their domestic law procedures.”

Clark’s recommendations, proclaimed openly on national television, amount to a recipe for mass detention of political opponents of the American state.

His assertion of the “right and obligation” of the US

government to conduct round-ups and mass internment operations against political opposition, specifically citing as his model the methods employed against ethnic Germans and Japanese during the Second World War, provides a chilling insight into the thinking of powerful sections of the US ruling establishment.

Clark’s insistence, moreover, that such measures remain in force “for the duration” of Washington’s temporally and geographically limitless “global war on terrorism” amounts to advocacy of the permanent imprisonment of individuals deemed guilty of no actual crime, but merely being “radicalized” and “disloyal.”

These are not the ravings of some television talking head or military crackpot. Coming from a figure of Clark’s pedigree, such comments necessarily reflect views widely discussed within the US state.

As supreme commander of NATO, Clark held one of the most senior and politically influential posts in the US military. While serving as Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR), Clark oversaw the NATO bombing campaign against Yugoslavia, Operation Allied Force, beginning in March 1999.

In both the 2004 and 2008 presidential campaigns, Clark was considered among the Democratic Party’s leading contenders. He would likely have gained a senior position in the Obama administration had he not backed Obama’s Democratic rival Hillary Clinton after dropping out of the 2008 primary campaign.

His role as a high-profile supporter of Hillary Clinton’s latest presidential bid suggests, however, that Clark’s political ambitions have only been placed on hold. Under a Clinton presidency, Clark could well get the chance to implement his proposals for mass “segregation” of dissidents.

Preparations for the sort of measures advocated by General Clark are clearly well advanced.

In recent weeks, as videos shot in locations from Arizona to New York show, US military units have conducted training exercises, practicing military internment and crowd control techniques at mock internment camps, with military personnel posing as detainees.

Clark's statements, made last Friday on the major cable news outlet MSNBC, have been met with total silence from the corporate-controlled media, failing to receive even a passing reference in the pages of the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, or the *Wall Street Journal*.

This silence in the face of an open call for internment of domestic political opponents, issued by one of the country's leading political generals, underscores the fact that the entire political and media establishment has decisively broken with centuries-old bourgeois democratic norms. The media silence will no doubt serve to encourage forces within the US military and intelligence apparatus to intensify the drive toward dictatorship.

For decades, the military and intelligence bureaucracies have developed the administrative, infrastructural and police components of an embryonic totalitarian state. Congressional hearings in 1987 on the Iran-Contra covert operations conducted by the Reagan administration exposed the existence of a plan developed by the Pentagon, codenamed Rex 84, to detain hundreds of thousands of immigrants and political dissidents and imprison them in militarized prison camps.

One Rex 84 sub-component, Operation Cable Splicer, envisioned the replacement of existing bourgeois political institutions by a shadow dictatorship controlled by a select group of some 100 executive branch cadre.

In the immediate aftermath of the September 11, 2001 terror attacks, the Bush administration staged a dry run of updated Continuity of Government (COG) plans for a "shadow government, deploying dozens of pre-selected officials to a network of secret command-and-control bunkers across America," the *Washington Post* reported in March of 2002.

The George W. Bush administration made further preparations for new prison camps in 2006, signing a \$400 million contract with KBR to build up the Department of Homeland Security's "detention and

processing capabilities."

The Obama administration has expanded the authoritarian legal and policy framework developed under previous administrations. Since taking office, Obama has issued annual decrees renewing the state of emergency declared by the Bush administration after 9/11 and further entrenching emergency powers granted to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

In a series of annual National Defense Authorization Acts, the Obama administration has codified the anti-democratic measures implemented under Bush, asserting unlimited power to indefinitely detain or kill individuals without trial.

The preparations for mass detention are part of broader efforts to tighten the grip of the ruling elite over society, using the pretext of an unending "national emergency." Plans for dictatorial rule have found concrete expression in the imposition of de facto martial law in Boston following the Boston Marathon bombings of 2013 and last year in Ferguson, Missouri following the outbreak of protests against the police murder of Michael Brown.

In March of 2012, President Obama issued an executive order, "National Defense Resources Preparedness," that empowered the DHS to assume dictatorial control over the US economy, including any and all actions considered "necessary to ensure the availability of adequate resources and production capability, including services and critical technology, for national defense requirements."

Last week, the Senate Intelligence Committee approved legislation granting the US government new powers to demand regular reporting from social media platforms about individuals suspected of ties to "terrorist activity."



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