

Trump deploys military to confront “immigrant invasion”

Eric London
30 October 2018

On Monday, the Trump administration and the Pentagon announced the deployment of 5,200 soldiers across the US-Mexico border by the end of the week. This will be the largest combat-ready military mobilization on US soil since the urban rebellions of the late 1960s. The military has given the initiative the mission name “Operation Faithful Patriot.”

Thousands of troops and billions of dollars’ worth of equipment are being mobilized in advance of a major national address by Trump announcing further restrictions on immigration.

The deployment is a direct threat to the lives of thousands of workers fleeing Central American countries ravaged by over a century of US imperialist exploitation, dictatorship and war. With no opposition from any section of the US political establishment, the government is preparing a confrontation with unarmed men, women and children that could rapidly result in US troops shooting, wounding and killing refugees seeking asylum at the US border. Last Thursday, Trump declared the caravan a “national emergency.”

The administration is seeking to manufacture a national security state-of-siege crisis on the eve of the November 6 midterm elections. The aim is to whip up a climate of fear and panic and encourage further right-wing violence in order to stampede voters behind a far-right agenda to be carried out in the aftermath of the vote. At the same time, Trump and his fascist advisers are working to create the basis for an extra-parliamentary extreme-right movement.

Election Day is to be held in the shadow of a war-like military deployment on US soil, establishing a further precedent for the militarization of US politics and every aspect of social life.

At a press conference yesterday afternoon, General Terrence O’Shaughnessy and Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) Commissioner Kevin McAleenan outlined what amounts to plans for an offensive military assault that will

play out as early voting takes place nationwide. McAleenan said CBP was preparing for “riot control” and added that the agency was calling in thousands of additional officers to man the “front lines” in the fight against immigrants.

General O’Shaughnessy said the Pentagon was deploying three companies of Black Hawk assault helicopters armed with “the latest technology,” as well as other “aviational assets,” including transport planes and drones. The mobilization will include US Marines as well as military police and “medical assistance”—forces that are deployed only when the military is preparing for potential combat. “The units are deploying with weapons,” O’Shaughnessy said, as well as hundreds of miles of razor wire, barricades and building material.

“This is just the start of the operation,” he added, noting that troop levels can be increased as needed.

President Trump and leading government officials are speaking the language of Hitler and Goebbels. “Many Gang Members and some very bad people are mixed into the Caravan heading to our Southern Border,” Trump tweeted yesterday.

“Please go back, you will not be admitted into the United States unless you go through the legal process. This is an invasion of our Country and our Military is waiting for you!”

In a Sunday television appearance, Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen used language normally reserved for threats of war abroad: “[E]very possible action... is on the table” with regard to the caravan, she said, just days after threatening that the military and border patrol “have the ability of force to defend themselves.”

In a remarkable press conference Monday afternoon, White House Press Secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders refused to deny that the administration might suspend habeas corpus and posse comitatus, the law barring the

deployment of the military to carry out policing functions on US soil, to confront the caravan. As one reporter pointed out during the press conference, Trump's use of the term "invasion" has constitutional significance, since Article One of the Constitution refers twice to Congress' power to abrogate basic democratic rights in the face of an "invasion."

"Invaders" was also the term employed on social media by Robert Bowers, who killed 11 Jewish people at the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh on Saturday, in the worst anti-Semitic attack in US history. Bowers specifically targeted the synagogue because of its defense of caravan participants, who he said were out to "kill our people."

Trump's fascistic language also inspired right-wing loner Cesar Sayoc to mail pipe bombs to Democratic Party figures last week and Gregory Bush to kill two African-American people at a grocery store in Kentucky.

Trump's authoritarian measures are being met with broad popular opposition, proving that the constituency for such initiatives comes not from the masses of people, but from within the ruling class itself.

This is part of a universal process. Around the world, governments are coming under the control of far-right forces promoted by leading sections of the ruling class and its traditional political parties and cultivated from within the state and military-intelligence apparatus.

In Brazil, ex-military captain Jair Bolsonaro was elected president Sunday after praising the military dictatorship that ruled the country from 1964 to 1985 and pledging to "clean up" what he called "red criminals."

In Germany, Chancellor Angela Merkel announced yesterday she would step down as leader of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) after the ruling CDU-Social Democratic Party (SPD) grand coalition was battered in another state election, this time in Hesse. The results strengthened the neo-Nazi Alternative for Germany (AfD), which has been promoted and defended by the grand coalition.

In Italy, Sweden and Eastern Europe, recent elections have strengthened the parties of the extreme-right, which scapegoat immigrants, demand mass deportations and instigate racist and xenophobic violence.

These gains for far-right parties are not the result of mass popular support. Rather, they are the product of mass disillusionment and disgust for traditional ruling parties that have carried out relentless attacks on working class living standards and engineered an immense growth of social inequality.

The election of Trump in the US is the product of the same process. Millions of workers abandoned the Democratic Party because of widespread hatred of Hillary Clinton and hostility to the pro-Wall Street, pro-war policies of the Obama administration.

The Democratic Party has given Trump the green light to conduct unprecedented attacks on immigrants, urging its House and Senate candidates to ignore the immigration issue and pledge their support for "border security."

A particularly criminal role has been played by self-proclaimed "socialists" such as Bernie Sanders, who said earlier this year, "I don't think there's anybody who disagrees that we need strong border security. If the president wants to work with us to make sure we have strong border security, let's do that."

The Socialist Equality Party (US) opposes the deployment of troops to the US-Mexico border. It is a major step in the preparations for war and dictatorship. It is a further warning that without a socialist revolution, the world confronts a repetition of the worst crimes of the 20th century on an even greater scale.

But the same crisis of the capitalist system that generates the drive to fascism and world war also impels the working class into struggle and creates the objective conditions for the alternative—socialist revolution.

The first three quarters of 2018 have seen the highest level of strike activity in years. On an international scale, the working class is looking for a way to fight the corporations and banks and their political representatives. It is this process, drawing the international working class together in a common struggle for democratic rights and social equality, which can bring an end to fascist violence and guarantee the rights of immigrants to travel the world and live where they please.



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact