

# More provocations, threats from Trump ahead of Tulsa rally

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In the run-up to his campaign rally in Tulsa, Oklahoma Saturday evening, President Donald Trump is focusing his energies on issuing threats against counter-protesters and incitements to fascistic elements and police officers to crack down on the ongoing demonstrations against police violence.

On Friday morning, Trump tweeted: “Any protesters, anarchists, agitators, looters or lowlifes who are going to Oklahoma please understand, you will not be treated like you have been in New York, Seattle, or Minneapolis. It will be a much different scene!”

Later he added, “Big crowds and lines already forming in Tulsa. My campaign hasn’t started yet. It starts on Saturday night in Oklahoma!”

In a further incendiary tweet, he declared that in response to Thursday’s Supreme Court ruling vacating his executive order ending the DACA program, which protects some 800,000 undocumented immigrants from deportation, he would issue a new order that complies with requirements laid down by the court. “We will be submitting enhanced papers shortly,” he wrote.

Trump is intent on further inflaming an already tense situation in Tulsa and across the country. The Republican mayor of the city of 400,000 has warned that he expects 100,000 people to flood into the city, including Trump supporters and anti-Trump protesters. On Thursday night he declared a civil emergency and imposed a 10 PM curfew in the downtown area surrounding the BOK Center, the indoor venue for the rally, which holds 19,000 people.

Tulsa Health Department Executive Director Dr. Bruce Dart has appealed to Trump to postpone the rally, saying, “A large indoor rally with 19-20,000 people is a huge risk factor today in Tulsa, Oklahoma.” Both the city and the state have reported record or near-record new infections over the past week, the result of ending all restrictions on social activity to contain the coronavirus pandemic.

On Friday, the state Supreme Court rejected a bid to halt the rally on the basis of health concerns, after which the mayor, at Trump’s request, lifted the curfew so as to allow Trump supporters to continue lining up in front of the BOK Center.

The very holding of the rally in the midst of a pandemic that is spiraling out of control and mass protests across the country in response to the police murder of George Floyd is an immense political provocation. Its provocative character is compounded by the site and timing of the event.

Saturday coincides with the weekend commemoration of Juneteenth, marking the June 19, 1865 announcement of the end of slavery in Texas by Union troops. Tulsa is the site of the most deadly racial attack on blacks in American history, the Tulsa Massacre, which began on May 31, 1921 and killed up to 300 African Americans.

The rally has two deeply reactionary and interrelated purposes. Trump’s first campaign event in three months, since the outbreak of the pandemic, is meant to underscore the finality of the economic “reopening” and back-to-work drive being carried out by all levels of government and by both big business parties, despite the catastrophic effect it will have on the health and lives of hundreds of thousands of workers forced to work under unsafe conditions.

Second, it is part of a deliberate effort to stoke up violent clashes so as to create a pretext for declaring martial law, mobilizing the military against anti-police brutality protesters and establishing a de facto presidential dictatorship. As the *World Socialist Web Site* has warned, Trump’s decision to put off calling in active-duty troops against demonstrators in Washington DC on June 1, after having proclaimed himself the “president of law and order,” did not signify the abandonment of the White House conspiracy to overthrow the US Constitution.

Trump was forced to back down at that point because of

opposition from the military brass, which itself was motivated not by any commitment to democratic rights, but rather by the belief that such a move was premature and would likely provoke a social explosion that could not be controlled. Congress, the Democratic Party and the corporate media said virtually nothing about the planned coup d'état.

Trump, the military and the ruling elite as a whole fear that the mass multi-racial protests against police violence are only the prelude to a far broader and far more clearly defined working class movement in response to the indifference of the government and the corporations to workers' lives and their use of the pandemic to step up the attack on jobs, wages and living standards.

Trump and his co-conspirators, including sections of the military, are preparing to impose authoritarian rule in order to violently preempt or suppress a movement of the working class that threatens the capitalist system.

The Trump administration is in deep crisis, beset not only by mounting social opposition, geo-political tensions and economic recession, but also by conflicts within the ruling class and an erosion of confidence in Trump's ability to manage the malignant contradictions of American capitalism. Recent days have seen two US Supreme Court rulings, on LGBT rights and DACA, in conflict with administration policy, and the mass publicity given to the tell-all book by Trump's former national security adviser John Bolton. Trump's response is to strike out all the more recklessly and appeal to the most reactionary forces.

To this end, the White House and the Trump reelection campaign are systematically seeking to incite far-right and fascist forces. On Thursday, Facebook removed 88 ads paid for by Trump, Vice President Mike Pence and the "Team Trump" campaign that prominently featured a symbol used by the Nazis to classify left-wing political prisoners during World War II.

The ads, which targeted all 50 states and were posted on Wednesday, inveighed against protesters, linking them to antifa, anarchists and looters. They displayed a large red inverted triangle, the symbol used by the Nazis to identify communists and other left prisoners held in concentration camps. They warned that "Dangerous MOBS of far-left groups are running through our streets and causing absolute mayhem."

In a statement issued Thursday, Facebook announced, "We removed these posts and ads for violating our policy against organized hate." A spokesman for the Trump campaign defended the ads, stating falsely that the red

triangle is a "common Antifa symbol."

The Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum issued a statement on Twitter in which it noted that the red triangle was "the most common category of prisoners registered at the German Nazi #Auschwitz camp." Mark Bray, a historian at Rutgers University and author of a book about antifa, said, "This is a symbol that represented the extermination of leftists. It is a death threat against leftists. There's no way around what that means historically."

There is no evidence that people associated with the loosely organized anti-fascist groups known as antifa played any role in the scattered acts of violence carried out in the course of the weeks of mainly peaceful demonstrations against police violence and racism.

However, there are increasing incidences of pro-Trump, far-right militia groups showing up at protests, particularly in more rural towns, and threatening or attacking demonstrators. These are the same forces Trump incited to demonstrate, arms in hand, in March and April to demand the ending of lockdown orders.

In recent days, a member of the so-called New Mexico Civil Guard shot and injured a protester in Albuquerque, New Mexico. In Bethel, Ohio, a village of 2,800 people, 700 right-wing counter-protesters showed up to threaten and intimidate a much smaller group of anti-police violence demonstrators.

Seventy armed men mobilized against a protest in Enterprise, Oregon. In Omak, Washington, a town with less than 5,000 residents, armed militia appeared when 400 demonstrators marched in a park. Some of the armed men positioned themselves on nearby roofs. In Boise, Idaho, an 18-year-old fired his weapon into the ground during a protest outside the capitol.

Ahead of Trump's rally in Tulsa, a Facebook group for "Oklahoma Patriots" is warning that antifa plans to bus in "crisis actors."



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