

President Trump sending federal police agents into major American cities

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Speaking to reporters in the Oval Office on Monday, President Trump praised the kidnapping of protesters by unidentified federal agents in Portland, Oregon as a “fantastic job” and vowed to send similar law enforcement groups into New York City, Chicago, Philadelphia, Detroit, Baltimore and Oakland.

Responding to questions regarding reports that the White House was sending 175 federal troops to multiple cities, Trump said, “Well, it depends on what your definition of ‘troops’ is. I mean, we’re sending law enforcement.”

He went on, “I’m going to do something—that, I can tell you. Because we’re not going to let New York and Chicago and Philadelphia and Detroit and Baltimore and all of these—Oakland is a mess. We’re not going to let this happen in our country. All run by liberal Democrats.”

Speaking about the federal agents in Portland, Trump said, “They’ve been there for three days. They really have done a fantastic job in a short period of time. No problem. They grab a lot of people and jail the leaders.”

Without presenting any evidence to back up his claims, Trump attempted to present the protesters in Portland as criminals: “People say protesters. These people are anarchists, people that hate our country and we’re not going to let that go forward. And I’ll tell you what—the governor, the mayor, the senators, they’re afraid of these people. That’s the reason they want us to help them. They’re afraid. I believe that they may even be physically afraid of these people, because what they are doing is incredible.

“We didn’t just go there. It wasn’t like it was started right away. We waited 51 days. We said, ‘we can’t let that happen anymore.’ But these are anarchists.”

The *Chicago Tribune* reported Monday that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is sending

150 agents to Chicago this week. Quoting anonymous sources, the *Tribune* report said that agents of Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), part of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, were being sent to assist city law enforcement in crime-fighting efforts. The sources did not spell out precisely what the HSI agents would be doing in Chicago.

CNN also reported that an unnamed senior law enforcement official confirmed that there are plans to deploy federal agents to Chicago through the end of the summer. CNN said, “The agents will focus on illegal gun sales and gun violence and outstanding warrants, among other targets, according to one of the sources. Both sources said an announcement could be made in the coming days.”

Colleen Connell, executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Illinois, condemned the actions of the Trump administration. She said, “Make no mistake: Trump’s federal troops will not be a constructive force in Chicago. As our colleagues have seen in Portland, Trump’s secret forces will terrorize communities and create chaos. This is not law and order. This is an assault on the people of this country, and the specific protections of protest and press in the First Amendment.”

Making it clear that the federal agents were being sent by the President, acting Homeland Security Secretary Chad Wolf told Fox News: “Putting politics over public safety is not only going to have a detrimental effect here in the short term, but also in the long term. And the president has been very clear—again, in these major metropolitan cities... if you’re not going to do your job, at some point we will have to take action to make sure that those communities are safe.”

More evidence of the violence being meted out against peaceful protesters in Portland came to light on

Monday. A 53-year-old Portland resident, Christopher David, was assaulted by federal agents with batons and a chemical irritant.

David, a graduate of the US Naval Academy and former member of the Navy's Civil Engineer Corps, told the *Washington Post* that he went to downtown Portland on Saturday evening to ask the officers, "Why are you not honoring your oath?" and "Why are you not honoring your oath to the Constitution?" David ended up in the hospital with two broken bones in his hand.

As explained here on the *World Socialist Web Site* yesterday, Trump has seized upon the ongoing protests in Portland, where both the city and state governments are controlled by the Democratic Party, to test out methods of police state repression and attack the Constitution. The use of federal forces in major American cities—in some cases at the request of police associations in contradiction to the policy of elected officials—is both a violation of the constitutional rights of protesters and a usurpation of the authority of local and state governments.

With his reelection poll numbers plummeting amid the catastrophic economic, social and public health crisis facing millions of people from the coronavirus pandemic, Trump is moving to take extreme right-wing measures in an effort to energize his fascistic base of supporters, especially among the police and federal paramilitary forces like Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

The sending of federal police agents—operating out of unmarked vehicles that "grab a lot of people and jail leaders"—in major American cities is an unprecedented further step toward presidential dictatorship in the US. It is highly significant that an anonymous DHS source told the *Chicago Tribune* that the agents from HSI, a special unit within ICE devoted to combatting criminal organizations, will not be involved in immigration matters in Chicago.

Predictably, none of the responses from leading Democrats to Trump's announcement addressed it as a threat to fundamental democratic rights.

Democratic Mayor of Chicago Lori Lightfoot criticized Trump for saying "a lot of disparaging things about the city of Chicago." She added, "He likes to use us as a political punching bag." Then, essentially

accepting Trump's fraudulent reason for sending HSI agents to Chicago, Lightfoot said, "But if the president was really committed to helping us deal with our violence, he would do some easy things."

In Michigan, Governor Gretchen Whitmer characterized the sending of federal police to Detroit as a racial issue. "Quite frankly, the president doesn't know the first thing about Detroit. If he did, he would know that for nearly two months now, Detroiters have gathered to peacefully protest the systemic racism and discrimination that black Americans face every day," Whitmer said.

Democratic Party Representative Rashida Tlaib, whose congressional district is based on the west side of Detroit, said in a post on Twitter, "They'll have to arrest me first if they think they're going to illegally lay their hands on my residents."

Democratic Mayor Jim Kenney of Philadelphia said that Trump's plan was "wrong on many levels," adding, "To send federal agents to police US cities that have not requested such aid can only impede the work of local governments and exacerbate already heightened tensions in these cities. And to target cities that are led by Democratic mayors is clearly a politicization of federal resources that should outrage all taxpayers."

As was the case during Trump's attempted military coup in June—which was derailed by the Pentagon brass only because they believed it was neither adequately prepared nor necessary as of yet—the Democrats fear the emergence of a mass revolutionary movement of the working class from below far more than they do the authoritarian aims of the Trump White House.

Only the working class, on the basis of its own independent political organization and armed with a revolutionary socialist program aimed at putting an end to capitalism on a world scale, can defend democratic rights and stop the descent of American society into dictatorship.



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