

Trump's plan to send paramilitary police throughout the US: The ruling class prepares for civil war

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The Trump administration's plans to deploy federal paramilitary police forces in major cities throughout the United States is a sharp escalation of the assault on democratic rights and the erection of police state forms of rule.

In Portland, the mobilization of these forces has already led to scenes reminiscent of Latin American death squads. Gangs of men, wearing generic camouflage without unit insignias or name tags, seize protesters, bundle them into unmarked vans and cars, and take them away for questioning, or worse.

On Monday, Trump threatened similar action in New York City, Chicago, Philadelphia, Detroit, Baltimore, Oakland and other cities. Referring to those protesting police violence, Trump said, "These people are anarchists, people who hate our country, and we're not going to let them go forward."

There is no legal or constitutional basis for the invasion of American cities by these federal agents. Congress has not authorized their deployment, and there is no actual emergency to which they are responding. For all of Trump's claims of violence and anarchy, the main violence is being perpetrated by his thugs.

In Portland, the federal attack has been spearheaded by heavily armed agents of Customs and Border Protection (CBP), specifically by members of its internal SWAT team, known as BORTAC, which is used to fight narcotics traffickers at the border and to suppress disturbances at US detention camps for immigrants. But Portland is 400 miles from the closest US border, and BORTAC is not targeting either drug dealers or immigrants, but protesters against police violence.

Joining the CBP officers are groups of armed men drawn from other agencies, including Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and the Transportation Security Administration (TSA). Like CBP, these are components of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and were deployed at the direction of its top officials—Trump lackeys

Chad Wolf and Ken Cuccinelli. The DHS has reportedly placed a total of 2,000 officers on standby for deployment around the country.

Trump is, in essence, seeking to develop a paramilitary force—consisting of fascistic immigration SWAT teams, along with local police forces—operating under his personal authority.

There are ominous historical parallels. In Germany, after its defeat in World War I, the ruling class sponsored the creation of the *Freikorps*, heavily armed groups of demobilized soldiers who acted as shock troops against the working class, murdering revolutionary leaders Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht. The *Freikorps* became the initial levies of Hitler's stormtroopers.

In Argentina, Chile, Brazil and other Latin American countries, the CIA-backed military regimes in the 1970s utilized fascistic paramilitary organizations, such as the Argentine Anti-Communist Alliance (Triple A) to eliminate militants in the factories. The signature tactic of the Triple A was to drag their victims into unmarked Ford Falcons that roamed Buenos Aires and other cities. After extended torture, the bodies were frequently dumped into the Atlantic Ocean from helicopters and planes.

Those who have been kidnapped by Trump's agents in Portland have been released to tell their stories, up to now. Only seven people have been arrested by federal agents, most for misdemeanor vandalism. Only tear gas and "nonlethal" projectiles have been used, not live ammunition. But precedents are being set. People are to become accustomed to the deployment of paramilitary forces, with the military in the background to intervene or act as arbiters.

The main target of Trump's authoritarian efforts is the working class. The Trump administration's actions take place as the ruling class anticipates an enormous growth of social conflict and resistance.

After handing trillions of dollars to themselves, the corporations and banks are enforcing a homicidal back-to-

work campaign that has already produced an explosion of coronavirus cases and deaths. Foreclosures are about to begin again after a temporary moratorium, and the federal unemployment subsidy of \$600 a week is scheduled to expire at the end of this week.

There is seething anger in workplaces and factories, with workers beginning to resist being forced to work and place their lives and the lives of their loved ones at risk. There is particularly intense opposition to the reopening of public schools, only weeks away, with the accompanying threat to the lives of children, their families, their teachers and all school employees.

While Trump's actions are a major escalation, they are the outcome of a protracted crisis of American democracy. The Trump administration is utilizing the entire apparatus of the "war on terror" against domestic opposition. Indeed, as the WSWS warned from the beginning, this was its intended purpose.

The Democratic Party is complicit in all of this. It helped create, in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 attacks, the apparatus of the police state: the PATRIOT Act, the Department of Homeland Security, domestic spying and the Northern Command to control military operations within the United States.

In 2013, it was the Obama administration that carried out the military siege against the population of Boston, using the Boston Marathon bombing as a pretext. As the WSWS wrote at the time, with the military-police house-to-house searches in violation of basic constitutional rights:

... the American ruling class crossed a historical, legal and political Rubicon. The die is cast, and the sun is setting on the democratic forms of rule that have existed in the United States for the past two centuries.

What history will remember as most significant about the events in Boston will not be the bombing near the marathon's finish line or the perpetrators or their motives. What will be remembered instead will be the unprecedented military lockdown of an entire major American city, with military vehicles in the streets and heavily armed soldiers going house to house—tramping through living rooms, bedrooms and kitchens, staring down their assault rifles at terrified, barefoot families in their pajamas.

The response of the Democratic Party to Trump's coup attempts is hypocritical and dishonest. In Oregon, local and state Democrats sought to dismiss Trump's actions as

"political theater." Governor Kate Brown said, "Trump is looking for a confrontation in Oregon in the hopes of winning political points in Ohio or Iowa." House Speaker Nancy Pelosi issued a statement decrying "President Trump's political games."

At the same time, Pelosi agreed to take up the new budget for the Department of Homeland Security next week, including full funding for the CBP, ICE and other agencies whose paramilitary units are engaged in attacks on both immigrants and the American people as a whole.

No Democrat has called for Trump's impeachment over the plans to invade Democratic Party-controlled cities.

Trump's actions come less than two months after he went on national television to declare his intention to invoke the Insurrection Act of 1807 and deploy military forces to suppress the mass protests that erupted after the police murder of George Floyd.

The Democrats ceded all opposition to Trump's attempted coup to the military and retired generals who opposed the action out of fear that it could backfire because it had not been politically prepared. They regarded such a major step as *not yet* necessary. Trump pulled back temporarily and did not invoke the Insurrection Act.

As the Socialist Equality Party warned on June 8, "The dangers are very real. The conspirators in the White House have not ceased their plotting. The military is biding its time and considering its options. The police remain armed to the teeth."

These warnings are now being confirmed. The coming elections will be held under conditions of explosive social unrest and political crisis. Trump has already declared that he may not accept the outcome of the elections if he is defeated. The Democrats are counting on the military to intervene to force him out. All factions of the ruling class are preparing for civil war against the working class.

It is the social power of the working class that must be mobilized against Trump's attacks on democratic rights and his drive to establish a presidential dictatorship.



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