

Trump and Miller attempted to deploy 250,000 troops to US-Mexico border in Spring 2020

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In an article published Tuesday, the *New York Times* revealed that Donald Trump's fascist right-hand man Stephen Miller attempted to deploy 250,000 troops on US soil to close the 2,000-mile border with Mexico in the spring of 2020 with Trump's apparent support. The *Times* also reported that Trump and Miller proposed invading Mexico with military assassination squads to kill gang members around the same time.

Trump and Miller's plan was part of a fascist political strategy that played out over the course of 2020 and 2021 and poses a real threat today. The plan to deploy the army on US soil in March and April 2020 and carry out military action within Mexico would have transformed major US cities like San Diego, Phoenix and El Paso into armed encampments, with confrontations between soldiers, Mexican troops and mass demonstrations from both sides of the border leading to martial law or full-scale war. For over a year, the military and Democratic Party leadership have withheld this information from the public.

The *Times* acquired details of the Trump-Miller plan through discussions with high-level military officials. "With the coronavirus pandemic raging, Stephen Miller, the architect of Mr. Trump's immigration agenda, had urged the Homeland Security Department [DHS] to develop a plan for the number of troops that would be needed to seal the entire 2,000-mile border with Mexico," the *Times* wrote.

In response to the outbreak of the pandemic, which triggered wildcat strikes and a collapse of the stock market, Miller appealed to a network of fascist forces within the state and military in an attempt to scapegoat immigrants for COVID-19 and prepare for broader crackdowns on social opposition. The *Times* report explained, "As the administration debated ways to secure the southern border against the virus, Mr. Miller urged top officials at the Department of Homeland Security to come up with the actual number of troops it would take to shut the entire border down."

Miller, who now leads a major pro-Trump think tank, recently made his motivations clear, telling the *Times*, "With economies and health care systems faltering across the planet, our southwest border would have become the epicenter of illicit Covid fueled migration — one giant, never-ending superspreader event. Instead, the border was successfully sealed and the would-be violators and spreaders got the message and stayed home."

In response to Miller's appeal, either DHS or the Pentagon then agreed to propose a deployment of 250,000 troops, more than were ever deployed at one time in Iraq or Afghanistan. According to the *Times*, Miller's allies in DHS did not proceed with the request through the normal chain of command, but went directly to the armed forces' Northern Command, a combat command center established in the aftermath of September 11, 2001 to oversee troop deployments in North America, including on US soil.

The deployment was one prong of a two-part strategy. "Around the same time that officials considered the huge deployment to the American side of the border with Mexico," the *Times* wrote, "Mr. Trump also pressed his top aides to send forces into Mexico itself to hunt drug cartels, much like American commandos have tracked and killed terrorists in Afghanistan or Pakistan, the officials said."

Trump and Miller are well aware that such a move would have immediately led to mass demonstrations across the United States and would have also provoked retribution by gang networks functioning in major American cities, likely resulting in attacks on police officers or government officials in cities like Los Angeles, Chicago and New York. This would have then been used to justify deploying the military across major cities, and not just those near the southern border. The revelations shed new light on the Canadian government's protests in March 2020 over the Trump administration plans to deploy troops to the northern border as well.

According to the *Times* report, the leadership of the

military ultimately made the decision not to accept the proposals. “After a brief but contentious confrontation with Mr. Miller in the Oval Office,” the report notes, implying Trump’s presence, “Mr. Esper ended consideration of the idea at the Pentagon.”

The military’s opposition to the troop deployment stemmed not from the defense of democracy, but from its view that the move would require pulling troops back from its numerous bases abroad, limiting its ability to conduct imperialist war. The *Times* noted that the military felt the move “would undermine American military readiness around the world.”

The *Times* reported that the military, Miller and Trump agreed to compromise by letting Trump invoke Title 42 to ban all immigration into the US, evidently satisfying Miller. The *Times* reported, “Mr. Miller, who had prevailed in previous clashes with military officials over troop deployments to the border, did not press the issue, according to a person familiar with his thinking.”

Efforts to deploy the military in the spring were an escalation of a strategy that had developed over the course of 2017 through 2019 and would explode in the run-up to the 2020 election and 2021 inauguration. Miller indeed “prevailed” over the military and Democrats, who acquiesced to Trump’s decision to deploy 5,000 troops to the border in 2018.

The fact that the Pentagon brass and Democratic Party leadership withheld details of this plot from the public for over a year facilitated Trump as he escalated his fascist strategy over the latter half of 2020 and into 2021. Just weeks after the 250,000-troop proposal in May and June 2020, Trump attempted to invoke the Insurrection Act in response to the protests over the police killing of George Floyd, again threatening to deploy the military to major cities. The fascist plot continued through Trump’s refusal to accept the outcome of the November election and his appeal to fascist militia to “stand back and stand by,” culminating in the January 6, 2021 putsch attempt to stop the certification of Biden’s victory.

The cover-up continues today. Within hours of the publication of the *Times* report, the article was removed from the paper’s online front page. By Wednesday morning, there was no reporting of the revelations on the online front pages of the *Times*, *Washington Post*, *Politico*, *The Hill*, ABC News, NBC News, CBS News or CNN.

Although Joe Biden pledged that his presidency would “restore democracy,” he and the Democratic Congress have continued to carry out Trump’s immigration policies, strengthening the repressive apparatus that is lying in wait for Trump’s comeback and promoting the anti-immigrant propaganda for Trump and Miller’s political gristmill.

Earlier this month, Biden and Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin deployed 3,000 National Guard members to prevent immigrants from escaping war and poverty at the US-Mexico border.

The Biden administration has detained 1.3 million immigrants since his inauguration, over three times the average of yearly detentions under Obama and Trump. The Biden administration has announced it will restore Trump’s “Remain in Mexico” policy, which abolishes the right to enter the US to apply for asylum. Earlier this week, Biden’s nominee for head of Customs and Border Protection, Chris Magnus, testified that Title 42 is “absolutely imperative” and said he supports Donald Trump’s proposal to expand the border wall.

There is no constituency for democratic rights within the ruling class. The Democratic Party continues to praise Republicans as their “colleagues” even as Trump and his fascist supporters consolidate power with state Republican parties in the lead-up to the 2022 midterms. The Democrats have refused to conduct thorough, public investigations into Trump’s role on January 6. They are paring down their own social spending bills and guaranteeing a degree of social and economic desperation that Miller and Trump will seek to exploit.

The task of defending democratic rights falls to the working class, which is mobilizing itself in a massive global strike wave, the likes of which have not been seen in many decades. It is this objective movement that has the power to thwart Trump and Miller’s plots, which depend on the silence of the Democratic Party and the corporate media and which have next to no support among broad masses of working people in the US and internationally. The billions-strong global working class must be informed of the danger and its immense social power activated on the basis of a revolutionary socialist program.



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