

Far-right “People’s Convoy” arrives outside Washington D.C.

Jacob Crosse
6 March 2022

Over the weekend, the US-based, far-right “People’s Convoy,” ostensibly organized in opposition to rapidly disappearing COVID-19 public health measures, arrived in the Washington D.C. area, without causing any noticeable traffic problems or blockades.

Despite significant support from far-right sections of the ruling class, including in favorable reports, interviews with rally organizers, daily coverage on Fox News and on fascist former Trump adviser Steve Bannon’s “War Room” podcast, the convoy—as of this writing—appears to have only drawn in about 1,000 vehicles, fewer than half of them heavy trucks.

While organizers attempted to paint the convoy as an organic expression of working class resistance to the “bio-medical security state,” in the words of Florida Governor Ron DeSantis, the relatively small convoy was dominated by the petty bourgeoisie not the working class. Most of the vehicles were pickup trucks, SUVs and recreational vehicles, along with a few hundred semi-tractors, festooned with American and Canadian flags, as well as pro-Trump slogans.

The profit-driven, anti-scientific message espoused by the “People’s Convoy” was to declare the pandemic “over,” even though it continues to kill more than a thousand people a day, adding to the death toll of nearly 1 million in the US alone. This is linked to conspiracy theories that the pandemic is a hoax devised by the government and the media, and that the vaccination campaign is secretly inserting computer chips into people’s bodies for nefarious purposes.

This anti-science, anti-public health message is deeply unpopular. Despite an unrelenting media and political campaign, spearheaded by the Biden administration, which has fully embraced Trump’s “herd immunity” policies, a majority of the US population still supports mask mandates to stem the

spread of the coronavirus. According to a February CBS News-YouGov poll, 56 percent of respondents said their state should require the wearing of masks inside, including 57 percent who said masks should be required in schools.

The cross-country plague convoy left Adelanto, California, on February 22, picking up a few hundred COVID-19 denialists and far-right supporters along the way. About 5,000 people gathered on Friday night at the Hagerstown Speedway, a racetrack about 80 miles outside of the US capital. On Sunday, the convoy left the track and headed toward Washington, where they proceeded to spend about four hours driving twice around the Capital Beltway, a 64-mile stretch of interstate that surrounds the D.C. metro area.

On Sunday, a few dozen people gathered on various overpasses on the Beltway either in support or against the convoy. While various social media groups in support of the convoy attracted thousands of followers online in the past few weeks, events in Ukraine have caused divisions within the ultra-right movement, with some backing out due to fear that the convoy is a “false flag” operation, designed to entrap Trump supporters.

Last month the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) leaked a memo warning that the convoy could cause significant traffic disruptions, gridlock and lead to possible counter-protests. The memo warned that the convoy would seek to emulate the occupation of downtown Ottawa, the Canadian capital, and could surround the U.S. Capitol. Fearing a possible repeat of January 6, 2021, the fascist attack on the Capitol during the counting of electoral votes in the presidential election, the Pentagon authorized the deployment of 700 National Guard soldiers and 50 large vehicles, while steel security fencing was erected around the Capitol complex.

While organizers of the convoy had sought to create disruption, on Sunday roughly two hours into their loop around the Capital Beltway the convoy became dispersed with normal traffic, causing no delays.

“We’re not even sure we can call it a convoy anymore because it’s so dispersed among routine traffic at this point,” Virginia State Police spokeswoman Corrine Geller told the *Washington Post*. The official webpage of the “People’s Convoy” noted that participants will continue to mass at the Hagerstown Speedway.

The “People’s Convoy” has so far failed to have the same impact as its Canadian counterparts, an indication that the US ruling class and the Biden administration will not brook any disruptions to the drive toward imperialist war with Russia. The *Post* reported on Sunday that the Pentagon had authorized extending the presence of National Guard soldiers in D.C. through Wednesday.

In an interview with NBC News , convoy co-organizer and Trump operative Brian Brase stressed the convoy will not actually enter the District of Columbia. Brase, who has admitted to being in constant contact with law enforcement, instead said participants will continue to drive around the Beltway every day as part of an effort to force lawmakers to give in to the convoy’s nebulous and evolving demands.

“What the People’s Convoy’s looking for is, we’re looking for immediate end to the state of emergency,” Brase told NBC. “We don’t believe there is an emergency any longer.”

Like the Canadian convoy, the US convoy has been a top-down operation, with comparatively few actual working truck drivers, organized and funded by the same forces behind former President Donald Trump’s failed coup. Leading Trump co-conspirator and former Trump aide Peter Navarro boasted on Bannon’s War Room podcast this past Friday that the convoy and its “truckers” are “making an incredibly important statement about these failed vaccine mandates.”

“And we must press that through,” added Navarro.

Demonstrating the support the convoy has within the “America First” wing of the Republican Party and by extension the ruling class as a whole, on Monday, Republican representatives Matt Gaetz (Florida), Thomas Massie (Kentucky) and Marjorie Taylor Greene (Georgia) will be hosting a “Trucker Round

Table” with rally organizers, where they will combine the homicidal demands of the opponents of vaccination with the incitement of fascistic violence on behalf of Trump.



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact