

In TIME interview: Trump threatens military repression and post-election violence

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In a lengthy interview with *TIME* magazine for its current cover story, fascist ex-president Donald Trump doubles down on threats to round up millions of immigrants using police, the National Guard and the regular military if he returns to power in the 2024 election, while suggesting there would be a violent response if he were to lose.

Trump lays out a political agenda to satisfy his most right-wing supporters, while at the same time seeking to reassure Wall Street and the military-intelligence apparatus that he will continue their aggressive policies in Ukraine, the Middle East and against China.

Under the headline, “If He Wins,” *TIME* political correspondent Eric Cortellessa draws out from Trump—mainly through flattery and by not challenging his brazen lies—the fullest account so far of his intentions for a second presidency. Despite maintaining that his expressed desire for a dictatorship, voiced in an interview with Fox News, was only a joke, Trump outlines a program of authoritarianism that amounts to a presidential military dictatorship.

This starts with his refusal to accept the outcome of the upcoming 2024 election or disavow a violent response by his supporters if he loses. “I think we’re going to win,” Trump said. When asked about possible violence, he continued, “And if we don’t win, you know, it depends. It always depends on the fairness of an election.”

Trump embraced the fascist criminals who attacked the US Capitol on January 6, 2021 in an effort, instigated by the president himself, to overturn the 2020 election and keep him in the White House. “I call them the J-6 patriots,” he said, adding, in response to the question of whether he would consider pardoning all of them, “Yes, absolutely.”

Claiming that there were 15 to 20 million undocumented immigrants in the United States, Trump said he would order mass round-ups and expulsions as soon as he set foot again in the White House. He said the primary vehicle of repression would be local police, but these would be supplemented by calling out the National Guard wherever necessary.

“I can see myself using the National Guard and, if necessary, I’d have to go a step further, Trump said. “(I)f I thought things were getting out of control, I would have no problem using the military, per se.”

Asked about the *posse comitatus* law, which prohibits the use of the military in law enforcement operations against civilians within the United States, Trump replied:

Well, these aren’t civilians. These are people that aren’t legally in our country. This is an invasion of our country. An invasion like probably no country has ever seen before. They’re coming in by the millions.

The interviewer did not pursue the issue, or point out that the millions of migrants have millions of US citizen family members, and millions of other working people and youth are opposed to mass deportations. Any use of the military to round up and deport immigrants would mean a full-scale war against the population of the United States.

Trump again raised the delusional claim that the influx of migrants is a screen for a covert Chinese military operation against the United States, saying:

[W]e have a major force that’s forming in our country, when you see that over the last three weeks, 29,000 people came in from China, and they’re all fighting age, and they’re mostly males.

In response to a later question, the former president said he would “certainly use the National Guard” against protesters “if the police were unable to stop” them. He cited his actions against protesters over police violence and racism during the summer of 2020, concluding, “I would use the National Guard. I don’t think you’d ever have to use much more than that.”

The use of the military against the American population would be combined with an effort to build up the authority of the US president over the executive branch, giving him the right to fire workers previously protected by civil service status. Trump also declared that he would direct the Department of Justice to carry out prosecutions and fire US attorneys if they did not obey his orders.

This is in keeping with the theory of a “unitary executive,” propounded by extreme-right ideologists who take their cue from the Nazi jurist Carl Schmitt, which posits the entire executive branch, some three million people counting the military, acting in unison on the orders of the president, as a Führer in all but name.

Asked about his suggestion that he would appoint a special prosecutor to go after Democratic President Joe Biden and his

family, Trump replied with a blackmail threat:

Well, it depends what happens with the Supreme Court. Look, a president should have immunity. That includes Biden. If they've ruled that they don't have immunity, Biden, probably nothing to do with me, he would be prosecuted for 20 different acts...

Trump proposes to establish a literal "police state" regime by immunizing police from prosecution for any action, no matter how brutal or violent, which they carry out in the course of "fighting crime." In the interview, he claimed that crime was at record levels, dismissing FBI figures released last week showing a continued drop in murders and other violent crimes, calling them "rigged."

Responding to the handful of prosecutions of killer cops, such as Derek Chauvin, who killed George Floyd in May 2020 by placing his knee on Floyd's neck and holding it there for nine minutes, Trump complained:

[T]heir authority has been taken away. If something happens with them, even if they're doing a very good job, they take away their house, they take away their pension... police are being prosecuted all the time. And we want to give them immunity from prosecution if they're doing their job.

On abortion, Trump sought to downplay the impact of the *Dobbs* decision by the US Supreme Court, which overturned *Roe v. Wade*, saying that it had only returned the issue to the states, and that states would enact differing laws and regulations. No national ban would get through the closely divided Senate, he said.

But he indicated that he would not oppose any state action against abortion rights, no matter how repressive and intrusive, whether criminalizing doctors who perform abortions or collecting information on female pregnancies in order to identify and prosecute women who obtain abortions in defiance of state laws. "I think they might do that," he said. "Again, you'll have to speak to the individual states."

After focusing mainly on so-called "social" issues like immigration, crime and abortion, the *TIME* interview only turned to the economy and foreign policy toward the end. Trump was at pains to declare that renewing his 2017 tax cut for the wealthy would be one of his two main priorities immediately after taking office, since most of its provisions were temporary and expire early next year.

He went on to suggest that his policies on Russia, Iran and China would be just as aggressive as those of Biden, if not more so. He claimed that his well publicized remark that Russia could "do whatever the hell they want" to NATO countries that did not pay their share of the imperialist alliance's budget was nothing more

than a "point of negotiation," an effort to goad other countries into raising their contributions.

Trump indicated he would support the US-NATO war against Russia in Ukraine, provided "Europe starts equalizing... I'm going to try and help Ukraine, but Europe has to get there also and do their job. They're not doing their job. Europe is not paying their fair share." (The European imperialists have actually paid as much for the war as the United States, although with more financial aid and less military aid). "I want them to pay their bills," he concluded. "Very simple. NATO is fine."

In the Middle East, while criticizing Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for his alleged failure to participate in the January 2020 assassination of Iranian leader Qasem Suleimani—the real source of the animosity is believed to be Netanyahu's recognition of Biden's victory in 2020—Trump focused on a likely war with Iran, in which he said the US would participate side-by-side with Israel.

On China, he sought to outbid Biden on tariffs, suggesting as much as 100 percent tariffs on Chinese imports, including those routed through Mexico. And he echoed the bipartisan howling about the necessity for the US military to defend Taiwan against any effort by Beijing to return the island to Chinese sovereignty.

These statements, in a publication certain to be widely read, appeared directed primarily at the military-intelligence apparatus, providing reassurance that there would be no effort by a second Trump administration to pull back from the aggressive posture adopted by US imperialism in what are the early stages of a world war.

In perhaps his most chilling remark, Trump said:

I think the enemy from within, in many cases, is much more dangerous for our country than the outside enemies of China, Russia, and various others.

It speaks volumes about the perspective of *TIME* magazine that there was apparently no attempt to clarify who those enemies were and what measures Trump intended to carry out against them.



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