

Seven Days in June: Trump's unfolding coup d'état

Statement of the SEP (US) National Committee and WSWS Editorial Board

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The deployment of the military onto the streets of Los Angeles—the second-largest city in the United States—marks a qualitative escalation of the Trump administration's ongoing, well-prepared coup d'état. While troops patrol the streets of Los Angeles under the pretext of responding to protests, the true epicenter of this operation is the White House.

The historical parallels are to the brutal military dictatorships imposed across Latin America in the 1970s—in Chile, Brazil, Argentina and elsewhere—where capitalist governments, unable to rule through existing institutions, responded to social crises with mass repression, disappearances and terror. What is involved, however, is not the military overthrowing the president, but the sitting president overthrowing the Constitution.

This is the situation as of Sunday night:

On Saturday night, Trump gave the order to federalize the California National Guard, an action opposed by the state's governor, Democrat Gavin Newsom. By Sunday, approximately 2,000 troops from the 79th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, the largest combat unit in the California Army National Guard, had been dispatched to the city.

The US Northern Command is saying that approximately 500 active duty Marines are prepared to deploy in Los Angeles, and Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth has threatened on social media to send in "active duty Marines at Camp Pendleton." Trump has repeatedly signaled plans to invoke the 1807 Insurrection Act, which grants the president sweeping powers to deploy the military and effectively institute martial law.

• Stephen Miller, the architect of the administration's fascistic agenda, has labeled the spontaneous, localized and largely peaceful demonstrations as a "violent insurrection," in a clear indication of the preparation to invoke the Insurrection Act. Just last month, Miller declared that the administration is "actively looking at" suspending the writ of habeas corpus—a move that would effectively nullify core constitutional protections.

The administration is preparing violent repression, which will go far beyond the brutal crackdown and arrests that have already taken place. In remarks to NBC News on Saturday, "border czar" Tom Homan declared: "If this violence isn't tamped down, someone's gonna die, and that's just a cold fact of life."

• David Huerta, president of SEIU California, was arrested, beaten and jailed during protests. SEIU California represents 700,000 workers across the state. This is an indication of the massive repression targeting the entire working class.

• Trump and his allies are using language that is ever more violent and incendiary. On social media, Trump published a fascistic screed targeting "radical left" protesters as "instigators and often paid

troublemakers," who "WILL NOT BE TOLERATED." Trump has referred to California Governor Gavin Newsom as "Newscum," and Trump officials have threatened to arrest any government officials who obstruct ICE operations.

What is taking place is not confined to Los Angeles. An editorial in the *New York Times* cites the comments of Liza Goitein, the senior director at the liberty and national security program at the Brennan Center for Justice, who noted that Trump's order activating the National Guard authorizes the deployment of troops "anywhere in the country where protests against Immigration and Customs Enforcement are occurring or are likely to occur, even if they are entirely peaceful." That is, it is a preparation for martial law throughout the country.

The 1964 film *Seven Days in May* depicted the conspiracy of a military-political cabal to take over the government of the United States. Changing what needs to be changed, a similar process is now under way.

The deployment of the National Guard to Los Angeles on June 7 will be followed seven days later by a massive military spectacle in Washington D.C., scheduled for June 14—Trump's birthday. The event will bring more than 6,600 soldiers, 150 military vehicles and 50 helicopters into the capital.

It is dangerously naive to believe that once deployed these forces will depart the nation's capital. A militarized parade is being organized at the seat of government by a president who is openly carrying out a coup. On Sunday, as troops rolled into Los Angeles, Trump went to Camp David in Maryland for what was described as a "retreat of principals." Behind closed doors, in what now functions as a secure command post, he consulted with his top lieutenants and prepared the next stages of his offensive.

The events now unfolding are the execution of long-standing plans. Trump previously sought to deploy the military domestically in July 2020 in response to the mass protests that erupted across the country following the police murder of George Floyd. At the time, his push to invoke the Insurrection Act was met with resistance from within the military establishment itself. Then-chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Mark Milley, distanced the military from Trump's plans, and Secretary of Defense Mark Esper also voiced opposition.

Trump has drawn the lessons from that experience. Determined to eliminate any internal resistance to his dictatorial aims, he has elevated one of the most overtly fascistic figures in his administration, Pete Hegseth, to the position of secretary of defense. Hegseth now wields authority over the armed forces at a moment when they are being prepared for deployment not against foreign enemies but against the American population.

During the 2024 election campaign, Trump declared that he would

act as a dictator on “day one,” and he moved to implement this pledge from the moment he returned to the White House. On his first day back in office, Trump declared a “national emergency” and directed his advisers to prepare a series of executive orders, including recommendations on whether to invoke the Insurrection Act. He has since invoked the Alien Enemies Act of 1798 to carry out mass deportations to the massive prison complex in El Salvador.

As always, Trump is counting on the complicity and fecklessness of the Democratic Party. In response to the military deployment in Los Angeles, a group of Democratic governors issued a timid and toothless statement, describing Trump’s actions as an “alarming abuse of power” and warning that sending US Marines into American neighborhoods “undermines the mission of our service members” and “erodes public trust.”

The Democratic governors say nothing about what must be done to stop the imposition of a police dictatorship. Instead, they insist that local law enforcement—already actively participating in the repression—should be allowed to “do their jobs.” Terrified above all of the emergence of a powerful social movement from below, the Democrats seek not to stop the coup but to contain popular anger.

Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders has responded by appealing to Republican officials. “I would say that, to a large degree, the future of this country rests with a small number of Republicans in the House and Senate who know better, who do know what the Constitution is about,” he said on CNN Sunday. Sanders conspicuously avoided any defense of the immigrants targeted in the raids and said nothing about mobilizing mass opposition.

Various editorials in the media have voiced concern or opposition to Trump’s deployment of the National Guard and his use of the military against immigrants and demonstrators. But not one of them is prepared to state plainly what is happening: A political coup is underway. The implications are not being spelled out, because to do so would require drawing conclusions about the collapse of constitutional rule and the necessity of revolutionary opposition.

There is mounting opposition developing throughout the country. A country of more than 330 million people, with a history of two democratic revolutions, will not be intimidated and subdued by a ruling clique of political gangsters acting in the interests of billionaire oligarchs. The outrage over the deployment of troops, the attacks on immigrants and the destruction of democratic rights is spreading. But the central question is not whether there will be resistance—it is how that opposition will be organized and under what program.

In the four and a half months of the Trump administration, opposition has mounted to the assault on democratic rights and escalating war. Mass anger is building up over the state assault on campuses, where students have been seized and victimized for opposing the genocide in Gaza.

The decisive force—upon which all others depend—is the working class. The capitalist class sees no path forward but through repression and violence. These actions flow not from strength or confidence but from fear—fear of a mass movement from below that they cannot control. It is in the working class that the real power in society resides—power that is centered in the factories, workplaces and critical infrastructure of economic life.

We warn workers and youth against falling into the trap of isolated confrontations with the police and ICE, which will simply play into the hands of the Trump administration. However courageous the protests of oppressed communities and outraged students, the settling of accounts with the Trump administration requires the industrial and

political mobilization of the working class.

The Socialist Equality Party and the *World Socialist Web Site* call on workers to respond to Trump’s unfolding coup with decisive, collective action. Every factory, workplace and neighborhood must become a center of organized opposition to this massive assault on democratic rights.

The necessity of a general strike is becoming ever clearer—but such action will not emerge spontaneously. It must be prepared and led through the building of democratic, fighting organizations of the working class. This attack on democratic rights cannot be stopped through moral appeals, legal maneuvering or reliance on the Democratic Party and the union bureaucracies, many of which are either silent or openly aligned with Trump’s nationalist program.

The initiative must come from below. Rank-and-file committees must be established in every factory, workplace and neighborhood to prepare the basis for mass resistance. Emergency meetings must be convened in plants, schools and offices across the country.

Immigrant workers make up a massive and essential section of the American working class, and the attack on immigrants is the spearhead for a broader offensive against the entire working class. Trump’s move to establish a dictatorship is aimed at crushing all opposition to the rule of the corporate and financial oligarchy.

American democracy is in its death throes. Trump is not acting on his own but as the representative of a financial oligarchy that is hurtling toward fascism and war. There will be no return to “normal.” The political situation can move in only one of two directions: dictatorship or revolution.

This statement must be read, discussed and acted upon by every worker, student and young person who understands the gravity of the situation. Share it on social media. Circulate it at factories, warehouses, schools, hospitals and neighborhoods. Use it as a basis to organize meetings and form rank-and-file committees. If you agree with this statement and want to become involved in this fight, fill out the form below to contact the Socialist Equality Party.



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