After Trump announces military rule in the capital

Washington Post publishes government plans for deployment of troops to cities across the US

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13 August 2025

One day after President Donald Trump announced the federal takeover of Washington D.C. police and the dispatch of 800 National Guard troops to occupy the capital, a huge step in the establishment of a fascistic dictatorship in the US, the *Washington Post* reported on secret plans for a rapid deployment force of troops to move into cities facing "protests or other unrest."

The *Post* article exposes the fraud of Trump's declaration of a "public safety emergency" in the capital as the law-and-order pretext for normalizing the use of the military to suppress popular opposition and crush the democratic rights of the working class. In his White House rant on Monday, Trump, flanked by the heads of the Pentagon, the FBI and the Department of Justice, threatened to mobilize active-duty regular troops and expand the domestic use of the military to cities such as Chicago and New York.

The military-police takeover of Washington D.C marks the third deployment of troops for domestic policing since the beginning of Trump's second term in January, the others being the dispatch of troops to the Southern border and the mobilization of 5,000 National Guardsmen and 500 US Marines to Los Angeles earlier this year to suppress protests against Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raids. With no serious opposition from the Democratic Party, the courts or the trade unions, Trump has effectively rendered the Posse Comitatus Act a dead letter. That act, dating from 1878, bans the use of the military in domestic law enforcement.

The *Post* article begins:

> The Trump administration is evaluating plans that would establish a "Domestic Civil Disturbance Quick Reaction Force" composed of hundreds of National Guard troops tasked with rapidly deploying into American cities facing protests or other unrest, according to internal Pentagon documents reviewed by *The Washington Post*.

The newspaper explains that the plan calls for 600 National Guard troops to "be on standby so they can deploy in as little as one hour." The troops would be divided into two groups of 300 each and stationed at military bases in Alabama and Arizona.

Compiled by National Guard officials, the documents bear time stamps as recent as late July and early August, according to the *Post* report. The *Post* exclusive follows an August 2 report by the *New Republic* on an internal memo from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) discussing a July 21 meeting between DHS and Pentagon officials on coordinated action in "defense of the Homeland." The *New Republic* writes that the memo "suggests that DHS is anticipating many more uses of the military in urban centers, noting that LA-style operations may be needed 'for years to come.'"

The *Post* article notes that Trump ordered a test of the "quick reaction force" scheme during his first term. In the midst of the mass protests that shook the country following the police murder of George Floyd, 600 National Guard troops were put on alert in Arizona and Alabama. In the event, Trump mobilized the National Guard to crack down on protests in Washington D.C. and threatened to invoke the Insurrection Act on June 20,

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The special military force would be authorized under Title 32 of the US Code, which was used to mobilize National Guard troops from various states to intervene in Washington D.C in June of 2020.

The *Post* quotes Joseph Nunn, an attorney at the Brennan Center for Justice, who states, “You don’t want to normalize routine military participation in law enforcement. You don’t want to normalize routine domestic deployment.”

Citing the documents, the *Post* reports that the proposal calls for a rotation of service members from Army and Air Force National Guard units based in multiple states, including Alabama, Arizona, California, Illinois, Maryland, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Carolina, North Dakota, Pennsylvania, South Carolina and Tennessee.

The article continues:

> The 300 troops in each of the two headquarters’ locations would be outfitted with weapons and riot gear**,** the documents say. The first 100 would be ready to move within an hour, with the second and third waves ready to move within two and 12 hours notice, the documents note, or all immediately deployed when placed on high alert.

The response from the Democrats and the corporate media to Trump’s military-police takeover of Washington D.C. ranges from complacent indifference to enthusiastic support. Totally absent is any appeal for public resistance to the de facto coup against the US Constitution and what remains of democratic rights. This reflects the outlook of the ruling class, which maintains its rule through the two-party system and controls the media.

This is under conditions of mass and growing opposition in the working class and among the youth and sections of the middle class to Trump’s policies. Within the working class, there is a shift to the left in opposition to Trump’s policies of dictatorship, militarism, support for Israeli genocide in Gaza, persecution of immigrants, record tax cuts for the rich and over $1 trillion in cuts to Medicaid, food stamps, student debt relief and other social programs to help pay for the tax cuts for the oligarchs and record military spending. This past June saw the biggest protest demonstrations in US history on “No Kings” day, as some 15 million marched across the country in opposition to Trump.

The Democrats and trade union bureaucracy are far more fearful of a mass movement of the working class against the existing system than they are of dictatorship.

Muriel Bowser, the Democratic mayor of Washington D.C., a city with a huge working class population that gave Trump only 6.5 percent of its vote in November 2024, announced that she would acquiesce in Trump’s takeover. She merely complained that crime rates were actually falling and that adding more police would be more effective than the military occupation ordered by the White House. She said nothing about Trump’s demonization of the homeless as “dirty” and his pledge to purge the city of homeless encampments. The unions have largely remained silent.

The network evening news programs on Tuesday downplayed Trump’s announcement, placing it as the third or fourth item. The *New York Times* has issued no editorial comment. The *Washington Post* did not oppose the dictatorial content of Trump’s moves. Rather, it complained that they would not go far enough in reducing crime. The *Wall Street Journal* editorialized:

> Mr. Trump loves to cast himself as a man of action, and now he’s top cop. If he really helps to clean up D.C., cleaning out homeless camps and making public spaces safer for residents and tourists, he’ll deserve thanks.

No official institution, including the corporatist unions, has opposed or will oppose the erection of a fascistic presidential dictatorship under Trump. This is because democracy is incompatible with the levels of social inequality that exist under capitalism, above all in America. The defense of democratic rights depends on the mass, independent industrial and political mobilization of the working class against capitalism and for socialism.

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