Democrats downplay Republican governors joining Trump's military occupation of Washington

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Only days after President Donald Trump federalized the D.C. Metropolitan Police Department and ordered the deployment of the D.C. National Guard to Washington, three Republican governors announced they would be sending their own National Guard contingents in support of Trump's dictatorial ambitions.

Task & Purpose reported this weekend that more than 1,500 soldiers are set to be deployed in Washington, D.C. as part of Trump's so-called "Safe and Beautiful Task Force." On top of the 800 D.C. Guard soldiers activated by Trump, Republican governors Patrick Morrisey of West Virginia, Mike DeWine of Ohio, and Henry McMaster of South Carolina pledged to send additional National Guard units to the capital.

- Morrisey pledged between 300 and 400 troops.
- DeWine pledged 150 troops.
- McMaster approved 200 troops.

Trump declared a state of emergency in the capital city last week, home to around 700,000 people, more than the states of Wyoming and Vermont and roughly as many as Alaska.

Before the latest deployment, Washington, D.C. was already saturated with armed agents. The Metropolitan Police Department has about 3,800 officers, and Trump's actions added another 1,500 National Guard soldiers. On top of that, thousands of federal personnel from the Secret Service, Capitol Police, FBI, DEA, ATF, DHS, and Pentagon police already patrol the city.

In total, that means somewhere between 5,300 and nearly 14,000 armed personnel in a city of 700,000 people—between one for every 132 residents at the low end and one for every 51 residents at the high end. These ratios are comparable to the US military occupations of Baghdad or Kabul.

Months after claiming credit for reducing "crime" in the city, Trump now claims that a "crime wave" has taken hold and forced him to mobilize federal agents and seize control of the local police, and essentially city governance, from locally elected and hired Democratic Party officials, who have replied with a whimper.

In addition to the announced troop deployment, the *Washington Post* indicated that there are ongoing discussions in the Pentagon on arming the National Guard soldiers, who are already patrolling the streets alongside federal agents and the Metropolitan police.

The D.C. police-military occupation follows earlier dictatorial maneuvers this year: the use of National Guard soldiers and Marines in Los Angeles, and the deployment of roughly 10,000 soldiers to the US-Mexico border. In each case fabricated "emergencies" are conjured up to justify a state of exception: a "crime wave" in D.C. or a "migrant invasion" in California and at the border. The supposed threat of "criminal aliens" or "roving bands of youth" is a transparent lie used to justify martial law and the usurpation of local, democratically elected authority.

Using such lies to justify military occupation and federalization of local police is the method of fascist dictators. Trump, who already attempted to overthrow the government once, continues to claim the 2020 election was "stolen" and has openly hinted at running for president again in 2028, despite already winning two terms.

While Trump is initiating this drive for dictatorship, he does so on behalf of the besieged and hated ruling

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class. Republican politicians, including former Vice President Mike Pence, have endorsed Trump's actions. Asked on CNN to contrast Trump's willingness to deploy troops now with his refusal to deploy the National Guard on January 6 to the besieged Capitol, Pence replied:

"Well, Jan. 6 was a tragic day, but I know we did our duty that day, I wish the president would have done more," he said. "But I welcome his decision to deploy the National Guard and essentially federalize the D.C. Police Department."

Pence, frequently presented by Democrats and the media as a supposed paragon of "democratic values" for his refusal to overtly overturn the election on January 6, added: "I think it's important what the president is doing and I fully support it. I think the American people welcome the president taking decisive action to ensure the streets of our nation's capital are safe."

As a majority of Republicans march in lockstep behind the would-be dictator, the response of the Democratic Party is to downplay the danger, chloroforming the population, and themselves, with complacency. On Meet the Press Sunday, Senator Chris Murphy (D-Connecticut) dismissed the federalization of the D.C. police and the massing of troops in the capital as a "stunt":

"What's happening here in Washington, D.C., is just a stunt. … He didn't want to talk anymore about the fact that our health care system is about to collapse because of the cuts that they have made, that premiums are going to go up by 75 percent on Americans. And so, true to form, he just decided to create a new news cycle."

Lending credence to Trump's bogus claims of crime-infested cities and confirming the Democrats will do nothing to stop Trump's military occupation of D.C., and other major cities, Murphy concluded, "We will see what happens when Donald Trump treats the issue of crime more as a distraction rather than an issue that legitimately needs to be addressed."

But what Trump is doing is is not merely a "distraction" or efforts to create a "news cycle." The scaffolding of dictatorship is being built as workers and residents are increasingly terrorized and harassed by police and federal agents.

On August 16, hundreds of residents marched to the White House to protest the occupation. That same day, a local D.C. resident captured video of masked federal agents assaulting and kidnapping a delivery driver. The thugs used a taser and punched the worker, refusing to identify themselves when confronted by bystanders. When residents demanded to know who they were, one replied, "Shut the fuck up." Another sneered: "Liberals already ruined [the country]."

In the three-minute video, not one of the agents provided their name or agency. Other videos posted online show agents harassing residents sitting on their porches. "Tell your boys no more drinking outside," a purported US Park Police officer said, adding, "Donald Trump is tired of it."

These attacks will persist until the working class stops them through mass industrial action. As the shutdowns at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated, it is the working class that is essential to society—not the police, not ICE, not DHS and certainly not the fascists in the White House, their accomplices in Congress and their paymasters on Wall Street.

Democracy is incompatible with inequality. The only way the parasitic ruling class can defend its decayed system is through violence and deception. In response to Trump's drive towards dictatorship and the destruction of democratic rights, the Socialist Equality Party calls for the formation of rank-and-file defense committees in every factory, school, community, and job site, independent of the Democratic Party and their lackeys in the trade union bureaucracies.

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