

# ICE agents, National Guard could arrive in Chicago by weekend

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Illinois Governor JB Pritzker Wednesday said that state officials were informed that a federal immigration strike force backed by National Guard troops would be mobilized Friday and ready to take action in Chicago on Saturday.

The force would be based at the Naval Station Great Lakes, just north of the city. The Pentagon has approved the use of the base as a staging ground, to act both as a hub for operations directed by the Department of Homeland Security, and to house National Guard troops or active-duty military personnel if they are deployed.

Local officials in the Chicago suburbs near the naval base were briefed there Wednesday and told to expect about 300 Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents to target immigrants in the greater Chicago area, followed by the National Guard if there was any public disorder in response to the stepped-up raids.

Leon Rockingham, mayor of North Chicago, one of the suburbs near the base, told the press, “I don’t believe that a time has come in our country where the National Guard and ICE are coming into our community to basically scare the Latino population. ... I didn’t think our country would ever get to that point.”

In response to the build-up and threatened raids, organizers of the Mexican independence celebration “El Grito Chicago” postponed the event, set for September 13-14 at Grant Park in downtown Chicago. They said they were acting at the recommendation of state and local government officials. No new date has been set.

Pritzker said that the state had been informed by “patriotic officials inside the government and from well-sourced reporters about Donald Trump’s plan, which is to deploy armed military personnel to the streets of Chicago. He added that Trump was looking for “any excuse to put active-duty on our streets supposedly to protect ICE.”

Pritzker said he had been informed that the Texas National Guard was being readied for deployment to

Illinois, although Texas state officials denied this. The Illinois governor said he was not “absolutely certain” that Texas troops would be sent more than 1,000 miles to another state, on the orders of the president, an action that would be unprecedented in modern US history.

Trump’s campaign organization—which is raising vast sums of money although he is barred by the Constitution from running again for president—sent out a fundraising email Wednesday urging contributors to “join the MAGA Blitz and say: LIBERATE CHICAGO – SAVE AMERICA – STAND WITH TRUMP!”

Pritzker debunked the claims that the raids in the Chicago area were aimed at fighting crime. “Let’s be clear, the terror and cruelty is the point, not the safety of anyone living here,” he told a downtown Chicago press briefing. But he added that the state “cannot stand in the way” of federal law enforcement. “It’s not like we’re going to have armed men standing in between,” he said, but rather the state would go to court against illegal federal actions.

The governor said that he expected the stepped-up federal presence to last about one month, although some National Guard troops still remain in Los Angeles, three months after they were first deployed. And he urged residents to avoid any direct conflict with troops or federal agents.

This counsel of impotence and passivity was positively militant compared to the posture taken by congressional Democrats in Washington. House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries, in his opening remarks at his weekly press conference Thursday, did not mention either the troop deployment in Washington DC or Trump’s threats to send troops into Chicago, Baltimore, New Orleans, Boston and other cities.

He confined himself to a litany of shopworn Democratic criticisms of the Republican Party for failing to lower the high cost of living, “fix our broken healthcare system”

and “clean up corruption in this town.” He attacked Trump’s tax cut for the wealthy, passed two months ago, but said nothing about the presence of National Guard troops only a few hundred yards from where he was speaking in the Capitol.

When reporters raised the issue, mainly from a right-wing standpoint, suggesting that crime was plunging in Washington D.C. because of Trump’s military occupation, Jeffries responded with a full-throated salute to the police:

One thing I will continue to make clear is that we should support the Metropolitan Police Department, support the Chicago Police Department, support the New York Police Department, and support local law enforcement all across America. And what we should be doing is giving them the ability to do their jobs, with the resources they need to continue to protect and serve, Republicans have actually cut funding for local law enforcement. What does that have to do with making communities safe? And so we’re going to continue to make clear we’re focused on keeping communities safe all across America. And in my humble opinion, the best way to do that is to support local law enforcement, local police departments, and local partnerships between the police and the community.

Earlier this week, D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser signed an order providing for an indefinite coordination between the city and federal law enforcement officials, a capitulation to Trump’s takeover. But there are divisions within the District government, and the D.C. Attorney General Brian Schwalb filed a lawsuit Thursday challenging Trump’s executive order declaring a state of emergency and taking control of the Washington D.C. police.

This suit is likely to become moot, as Trump’s order expires next week unless Congress votes to extend it. House Republican leaders indicated Thursday that they would not introduce legislation to extend the emergency, citing Bowser’s order of coordination as sufficient. National Guard troops will remain in the city through to the end of the year, however, according to press reports citing Pentagon sources.

The troops from seven Republican-run states who have been sent to the District may be rotated out and replaced

by others during that period, these reports said.

As for New Orleans, Trump raised the prospect of sending troops there on Wednesday, in an apparently offhand comment during a press briefing with the visiting president of Poland. Asked about which cities might be targeted next, he replied, “And you have New Orleans, which has a crime problem. We’ll straighten that out in about two weeks. It’ll take us two weeks—easier than D.C.”

Republican Governor Jeff Landry enthusiastically welcomed Trump’s offer of National Guard troops to police Louisiana cities. “We’ll take President Trump’s help from New Orleans to Shreveport,” he said in a statement.

While the Republicans are enthusiastic about military-police rule, and the Democrats deliver their consent largely through silence, the majority of the American people oppose sending soldiers into the cities, by a 53-37 percent margin, according to a Yahoo/YouGov poll of 1,700 adults.

A majority, 51 percent, said Trump has “gone too far in sending federal troops into US cities,” while only one-third, 33 percent, would approve of Trump sending troops into their own communities. A majority of 53 percent agreed that Trump was “more of a dictator than most previous presidents have tried to be.”

These poll numbers give only a pale reflection of the mounting opposition to Trump’s unprecedented attacks on democratic rights. But they suggest what is inevitably coming: a direct clash between this fascistic government and the vast majority of American working people.



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