

Trump prepares martial law, orders invasion of Portland and Chicago

Socialist Equality Party (US)
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Over the weekend, the Trump administration escalated its war against the American people, launching coordinated military operations in Portland and Chicago.

In Portland, Trump has ordered an extraordinary and unconstitutional invasion, sending hundreds of California National Guard troops, previously federalized for deployment in Los Angeles, into Oregon's largest city.

More than 100 California soldiers arrived in Portland Saturday night, and the remainder were in transit Sunday. The Democratic governors of both states, Tina Kotek of Oregon and Gavin Newsom of California, have opposed Trump's action.

Newsom, in a social media post Sunday night, declared the sending of California National Guard to Portland a "breathtaking abuse of the law and power by the President of the United States. America is on the brink of martial law."

Governor Kotek had opposed the deployment of Oregon National Guard troops by filing suit in the federal district court in Portland. Judge Karin Immergut, appointed by Trump during his first term, handed down a 31-page order barring the action, ruling that the state of Oregon had sovereign rights under the 10th Amendment to the Constitution.

In remarkably scathing language, the judge wrote that Trump's attempt to federalize the Oregon National Guard with the claim that Portland was under siege by left-wing Antifa terrorists was "simply untethered to the facts." She added, "This country has a longstanding and foundational tradition of resistance to government overreach, especially in the form of military intrusion into civil affairs. This historical tradition boils down to a simple proposition: this is a nation of Constitutional law, not martial law."

Late Sunday night, Immergut issued an order against California or other troops being brought to Portland, calling it in "direct contravention" to her previous ruling.

A parallel invasion is taking place in Chicago. On Sunday night, Secretary of War Pete Hegseth, with the support of Texas Governor Greg Abbott, ordered the mobilization of 400 members of the Texas National Guard for deployment to Illinois, as well as "Oregon and other locations throughout the United States." Trump has already federalized 300 soldiers of the Illinois National Guard, ostensibly to protect the ICE detention center in the suburb of Broadview, just outside the city.

On Saturday morning, ICE agents opened fire on demonstrators, claiming they were seeking to block access to the Broadview

facility with their cars, wounding one woman, a US citizen, who was then arrested by the FBI. As with every statement by Trump, Stephen Miller, Kristi Noem and ICE, this account of the Chicago incident is undoubtedly a pack of lies. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) claimed that she had been in possession of a firearm, though the criminal charges filed by the government made no such assertion.

The White House is speaking the language of civil war. White House adviser Stephen Miller—one of the chief architects of the administration's fascistic program—responded to Immergut's ruling by declaring it "legal insurrection." He added, "The President is the commander-in-chief of the Armed Forces, not an Oregon judge." Following the Nazi principle of the "Big Lie," Miller wrote, "Portland and Oregon law enforcement, at the direction of local leaders, have refused to aid ICE officers facing relentless terrorist assault and threats to life."

In a separate post, Miller declared: "There is a large and growing movement of left-wing terrorism in this country, shielded by far-left Democrat judges, prosecutors and attorneys general. The only remedy is to use legitimate state power." This is an open threat that Trump could invoke the Insurrection Act of 1807 and send federal troops against Portland and other cities across the country.

There are active discussions within the Trump administration over the deployment of active duty military. The *Minnesota Star-Tribune* reported on leaked messages between Anthony Salisbury, a top aide to Miller, and Patrick Weaver, an adviser to "War Secretary" Pete Hegseth, on plans to deploy the elite 82nd Airborne Division to Portland. According to the paper, Weaver said Hegseth "wants the top cover from the boss if anything goes sideways with the troops there," that is, if people are murdered.

There is a staggering disconnect between the scale of the assault and what is being proposed by the Democratic Party in response. Newsom speaks of imminent martial law, while Pritzker gave a speech on Friday in which he accused Trump of "treasonous words" that are leading to "treasonous actions." But the Democrats propose no action.

The central issue posed by these events is the removal of this criminal administration. But not a single prominent Democrat has even called for the impeachment of Trump and Vice President JD Vance for their assault on the Constitution and democratic rights.

The statements from top Democrats treat the ongoing government shutdown as if all that were involved is a routine conflict over the budget and not part of an effort by the president

to establish a military-police dictatorship. Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer declared over the weekend, “It. Is. Simple. Republicans can reopen the government and make people’s healthcare more affordable at the same time.” House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries echoed him, declaring, “Democrats continue to stand up to protect healthcare for everyday Americans.”

Senator Bernie Sanders went so far as to praise January 6 coup conspirator Josh Hawley for calling for some extensions of Obamacare tax credits, tweeting, “Republican Sen. Josh Hawley is right. ... Let’s end the shutdown and save health care for millions.” In a separate statement, Sanders said that the country faces the biggest crisis since the Civil War. To make such a statement and then propose nothing in response, which is what Sanders did, is more than complacency. It is collaboration.

It is imperative that the working class intervene in this extraordinary crisis through mass struggle, on the basis of its own program.

There is enormous and growing opposition to the moves to establish a fascistic dictatorship in the United States. Demonstrations under the banner of “No Kings” are planned for October 18, with more than 2,100 separate actions scheduled in cities and towns across the country. The previous “No Kings” protests on June 14 involved between 5 and 11 million people—by some measures, the largest political demonstrations in American history.

These protests express the deep hostility of the working class and youth to dictatorship and oligarchic rule. But what is lacking, and what is most critical, is a conscious political perspective.

It is first of all necessary, as the Socialist Equality Party wrote in its statement of September 19, “to put aside all self-deluding hopes that what is unfolding is anything less than a drive to establish a presidential dictatorship, based on the military, police, paramilitary forces and fascist gangs.”

The Trump administration is seeking a provocation and a pretext for a vast escalation. The operations in Portland and Chicago are part of the Trump administration’s declared “war on the enemy within.” They come after Trump’s September 30 assembly of generals at Quantico, where he told the officer corps that America’s cities must serve as “training grounds” for domestic warfare.

Trump speaks for and represents the American capitalist oligarchy. The American ruling class has handed power to a political mafia that sees dictatorship as the only means of preserving its wealth and its system.

The government shutdown is being used as a weapon in this social counterrevolution—laying off hundreds of thousands of federal workers, gutting social programs and concentrating power in the executive. The *Washington Post* reported Friday that the administration is preparing the most sweeping attack on Social Security disability benefits in US history, eliminating age as a qualifying factor and threatening to cut off payments to some 750,000 older and disabled Americans. Combined with cuts to Medicaid and food assistance, these measures amount to the deliberate impoverishment of millions.

The Democrats represent the same Wall Street and military-

intelligence interests that back Trump’s economic warfare against the world and his pursuit of open military conflict with Russia and China as well as his attacks on the working class at home.

The Socialist Equality Party calls for the development of rank-and-file committees in every workplace, school and neighborhood as the foundation for coordinated, mass opposition. These committees must unite every section of the working class—industrial, service, public sector, healthcare, logistics, education and technology workers, together with students and youth—into a single movement against Trump’s dictatorship, the complicity of the Democrats and trade union apparatus, and the capitalist oligarchy as a whole.

These committees must link the fight against repression and dictatorship to the defense of jobs, wages and social rights, opposing layoffs, budget cuts, and every attack on living standards. In this struggle, the working class in the United States must turn to its most powerful weapon: its international unity.

The SEP is spearheading the building of the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC), which is coordinating workers’ struggles across borders and industries as part of a global movement. There are many expressions of growing opposition throughout the world, including the mass demonstrations in Europe against the ongoing genocide in Gaza as Israel’s US-backed slaughter approaches its second year, along with the wave of protests by young people that have swept across Africa.

The fight against dictatorship and fascism is inseparable from the fight against capitalism itself. To oppose Trump’s drive toward authoritarian rule, workers and young people must take up the struggle for socialism, for the reorganization of society on the basis of human need, not private profit. We urge all those who recognize the gravity of the present situation to join the Socialist Equality Party.



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