

Combat Troops Coming to US Streets?

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In his book titled “The Psychology Science (1966),” psychologist Abraham Maslow said the following:

“I suppose it is tempting, if the only tool you have is a hammer, to treat everything as if it were a nail.”

Others made similar comments. It reflects how the US operates domestically and abroad, what’s gone on throughout its history — notably post-WW II, waging endless wars on humanity for control over planet earth, its resources and populations.

The US is addicted to war and its state-sponsored horrors, ordinary people suffering most — including on militarized US streets, cops armed with battlefield-type weapons for use in defending privilege against popular change.

In his book titled “Terrorism and War,” historian/anti-war activist **Howard Zinn** said war is the most extreme form of terrorism.

In public comments, he said the “feeling I get when I wake up in the morning (is that) I’m living in an occupied country.”

“A small group of aliens have taken over the country and are trying to do with it what they will” — referring to the US ruling class.

Stressing that “(n)o human is alien,” he said “that’s true, except for the people in Washington.”

“They’ve taken over the country...driven us into...disastrous wars...sucked up the wealth of this country and g(ave) it to the rich...ruining the environment” at the same time.

Its “nuclear weapons” can kill us all. “(H)ow has this been allowed to happen? How have they gotten away with it? They’re not following the will of the people.”

“If the American people really knew history, if they learned history, if the educational institutions did their job, if the press did its job in giving people historical perspective, then a people would understand” they’re being lied to, manipulated, exploited, and greatly harmed by the self-serving policies of the US ruling class at the expense of most others.

Americans are ruled through the barrel of a gun. Baseball isn’t the national pastime.

It’s endless US preemptive wars against invented enemies. Domestically and abroad, core US policy reflects Orwell’s dystopian “vision of the future...”

It's no longer one day. It's now: "a boot stamping on a human face — forever."

The root cause of rage in US streets is institutionalized racism, inequality, and injustice.

Privileged interests are served exclusively at the expense of vital social change gone begging.

At a time of economic collapse, deepening main street Depression conditions, mass unemployment, growing millions without healthcare coverage, and ruling class indifference toward public health, welfare, and jobs creation to put people back to work, tinderbox conditions exploded nationwide.

African American **George Floyd**'s killing by four Minneapolis cops — not one, three others involved not charged or arrested — sparked what's going on.

If not that, it would have been something else because of pent up rage against a hugely unjust system.

It's getting worse, not improving, in the United States of Special Interests at the expense of the great majority — exploited, not served, by the privileged few.

On Monday, Trump threw more fuel on a national inferno of public rage instead of showing leadership to calm things by pledging transformational change to serve all Americans equitably.

Last week, he inflamed things by tweeting: "When the looting starts, the shooting starts."

...These THUGS are dishonoring the memory of George Floyd, and I won't let that happen. Just spoke to Governor Tim Walz and told him that the Military is with him all the way. Any difficulty and we will assume control but, when the looting starts, the shooting starts. Thank you!

— Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump) [May 29, 2020](#)

On Monday, he called on state governors to get tougher on protesters, ignoring blood in the streets already.

The vast majority of protesters are peaceful, exercising their constitutional free expression and assembly rights, along with petitioning the government on city streets for redress of legitimate grievances.

Small numbers alone are involved in unacceptable violence and vandalism.

On Sunday and Monday, I saw the results of what's happening on Chicago's North Michigan Ave., its Magnificent Mile — a sight I never could have imagined throughout the half century I've lived in the city's Streeterville neighborhood.

The entrance to my own residential building on a side street is boarded up, no one allowed in except residents, a county deployed security guard in the lobby overnight to protect the property from vandals.

Upscale shops along the avenue on both sides of the street are boarded up, including Walgreens' flagship pharmacy, temporarily closed, a problem for neighborhood residents needing prescriptions filled.

The surreal scene looks like something out of a Hollywood horror film, including mostly empty streets that overflow with people and vehicular traffic during normal times — cops now patrolling them.

Despite opposition by Dem governors over Trump's threat to send combat troops to restore order to US streets through the barrel of a gun, he may choose this option anyway, saying:

"If the city or state refuses to take the actions that are necessary to defend the life and property of their residence, then I will deploy the United States military and quickly solve the problem for them."

According to USA Today, "(m)ilitary helicopters, vehicles and personnel began to descend on the streets of Washington, DC, Monday night, hours after...Trump promised to 'dominate the streets.' "

ACLU National Security Project director **Hina Shamsi** called his threat to deploy federal troops to US city streets "irresponsible and dangerous," adding:

"No level-headed governor is asking for an even more militarized response to civilian protests against police brutality and systemic racism — for good reason."

"There are already many reports of civilian police and some state National Guard forces engaging in serious abuses, and the deployment of military personnel, who are generally not trained for civilian law enforcement, only escalates the risks."

"This president must not cause the country and its people even more harm."

Despite the risk of making a bad situation worse by taking this step, he can do it according to 19th century federal law — by federalizing National Guard forces and/or deploying Pentagon combat troops to US city streets.

According to the 1978 Posse Comitatus Act, he cannot deploy federal troops to "execute the laws...except in cases and under circumstances expressly authorized by the Constitution or Act of Congress."

Under the 1807 Insurrection Act, he can order what Posse Comitatus prohibits.

He can act on his own "to suppress an insurrection, domestic violence, (an) unlawful combination or conspiracy" — with or without a request by state or local authorities.

He can also deploy federal troops domestically to restore order if federal, state, or local laws are breached in the streets.

Nine earlier US presidents invoked the Insurrection Act, deploying federal forces to local communities to restore order.

They included Thomas Jefferson in 1808, Rutherford Hayes (1878), Grover Cleveland (1894), Woodrow Wilson (1914), FDR (1943), Dwight Eisenhower (1957), JFK (1962 and 1963), LBJ (three times in 1968), and GHW Bush (1989 and 1992).

By federal law and precedent, Trump can deploy federal troops to US cities as president and commander-in-chief.

Eisenhower did it to protect the rights of nine Black Arkansas students to be educated in Little Rock High School — enforcing the historic 1954 Brown v. Board of Education Supreme Court ruling.

Jack Kennedy did the same thing, enforcing desegregation orders in Mississippi and Alabama.

A major difference between earlier federal troop deployments to US communities and what Trump may order is the extent of what he may do — potentially affecting many US locations compared to specific ones alone earlier short-term.

Another major difference is that taking this step will challenge the right of thousands of aggrieved Americans — demanding equity and justice they deserve, denied by them the nation's ruling authorities.

On Monday, Public Citizen president **Robert Weissman** said

“(a)t this moment...it feels like the country is plummeting into a kind of deranged chaos” — noting unacceptable “inequalities” in the country, adding:

Trump’s “calls for violence against protesters, using racist tropes, makes our country far more dangerous.”

“His denunciation of protesters as ‘terrorists’ not only threatens civil liberties, it encourages violence not just by law enforcement, but by right-wing groupings — violence that will surely be directed primarily at people of color.”

“And his threat to deploy the military in our cities is a frightening warning of his existential threat to” fundamental freedoms.

“Against the backdrop of the daily (COVID-19) death toll and the worst unemployment since the Great Depression, Trump stands ready to divide us and spread chaos.”

“He may well believe, with reason, that chaos is his best hope for political survival.”

Ongoing protests in US cities for the past week are all about rage against the system.

Police brutality symbolizes hugely unfair and unjust governance at the federal, state and local levels.

Rage in the streets is happening at a time of economic collapse with unprecedented numbers of working-age Americans without jobs, students out of school because of COVID-19 related lockdowns, more normal life nationwide greatly disrupted and harmed by the nation's ruling authorities.

Human deprivation, despair, and anger over government dismissiveness toward public health, welfare, and fundamental rights explain what's going on in US cities nationwide.

If violently quelled and order restored without addressing the root cause of public anger, it's just a matter of time before things will explode again.

When people lose hope, they lose it because there's nothing more to lose.

Psychology Today earlier asked: "What happens when hope is lost?"

"Reading our newspapers recently is like waking up in some kind of Orwellian nightmare," the report said, an untenable situation.

"A man who takes pride in spreading lies, hatred and fear across borders is" is the US president, surrounded by a cadre of militant warmongers, indifferent toward the rights and welfare of ordinary people everywhere.

Instead of transforming hope into positive change, policies of the nation's ruling class crushed it.

When despair turned to rage replaces hope, how things are today in the US, dreams of a better life become nightmares.

It shows by what's going on, thousands taking to the streets to vent pent up rage against the system.

Small numbers involved in violence and vandalism are world's apart from the vast majority of peaceful protesters.

They're expressing justifiable anger against a nation serving the privileged few alone at the expense of most others — including during a state of economic collapse when vitally needed federal help is absent.

That's the stuff revolutions are made of. If not now, ahead if major inequities aren't corrected.

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