

# Executive Orders: Trump Presidency Escalates Attacks on Millions in the United States

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*After just seven days of the administration of President Donald Trump, a host of measures have been enacted which threaten a myriad of constituencies throughout the country and internationally.*

Executive orders and presidential memoranda have been announced relating to the resumption of construction on the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL); the building of a wall or fence on the border between the U.S. and Mexico; a ban on people from targeted nations seeking visas and refugee status; muzzling communications from government agencies; threats of withholding federal assistance to municipalities which refuse to turn over people designated as “illegal” by the state; and other actions.

Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto was scheduled to travel to the White House for a meeting with Trump to discuss bilateral relations. On January 26, it was announced that the meeting was cancelled.

The administration’s insistence that a wall will be built on the southern border and that Mexico will pay for it has created tensions between the two nations. The Mexican government has rejected such an assertion that it will finance the project eliminating the basis for any normalized relations.

An article published by Business Insider stated that the Mexican leader issued the following tweet saying: “This morning we have informed the White House that I will not attend the meeting scheduled for next Tuesday with the @POTUS,” Peña Nieto tweeted, according to an online translation.”

This same report went on to note: “The cancellation of the meeting came after Trump tweeted Peña Nieto should not meet with him unless Mexico was willing to finance the massive construction project. “The U.S. has a 60 billion dollar trade deficit with Mexico,” Trump wrote on Twitter. ‘It has been a one-sided deal from the beginning of NAFTA with massive numbers of jobs and companies lost.’” (Jan. 26)

## National Oppression and Political Repression Worsening

People of Latin American descent have been designated as the largest national minority in the U.S. From an historical perspective, the southwest and west coasts of the U.S. were seized from Mexico during a war of annexation in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. Many Mexicans and others U.S. residents, whom many have citizenship, face systematic discrimination and national oppression.

Another major executive order lifted a suspension of the construction of the Keystone XL DAPL which is slated to run through lands still controlled by Native people. A massive solidarity movement sprung up in 2016 involving millions across the country and the world. Thousands of people traveled to the Standing Rock lands to serve as “human shields” against attacks carried out by law-enforcement, the military and private security personnel working on behalf of the corporations who are spearheading the pipeline which will transport 500,000 barrels of oil per day.

Trump noted that 93 percent of the project has been completed and that it would create jobs for American workers. Yet the total number of positions is only a few thousand and these purported benefits ignore the legitimate concerns of the Indigenous people who say their water supply and other sacred possessions are threatened by the pipeline.

According to Eurasia Review, “A lawyer for the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe said the decision was made ‘hastily and irresponsibly.’ The tribe said it intended to pursue legal action against Trump’s order, adding that the pipeline posed a risk not just for their water supply but also for millions of Americans living downstream. One of the leading organizations in the Standing Rock protests, the Indigenous Environmental Network, called Trump’s actions ‘insane and extreme, and nothing short of attacks on our ancestral homelands.’”

“Trump is portraying his true self by joining forces with the darkness of the Black Snake pipelines crossing across the culturally and environmentally rich landscape of the prairie lands of America,” a press release issued by IEN stressed. In contrast to the views of Native people and their legal representatives, the President of the North Dakota Petroleum Council, Ron Ness, who heads the trade group representing oil firms, championed Trump’s decision saying it was “a great step forward for energy security in America.”

Two additional utterances from the Trump administration have significance for the African American people. The president tweeted on January 24 in reference to a major municipality, the city of Chicago, that: “If Chicago doesn’t fix the horrible ‘carnage’ going on, 228 shootings in 2017 with 42 killings (up 24% from 2016), I will send in the Feds!”

It was not clear if Trump was referring to federal civilian employees or military personnel. The National Guard for the state of Illinois could be federalized or regular units of the army could also be deployed in such a threat.

No mention was made of the horrendous socio-economic conditions prevailing among African Americans in Chicago and the state of Illinois where they suffer the highest unemployment rate in the country. Drastic cuts in educational, social and municipal services have been implemented while the leading corporations in the U.S. announce the regular increases in their profits.

There are precedents for such military deployments extending back decades. In Detroit, Newark, Chicago, Washington, D.C., Los Angeles, and other cities in the 1960s, both National Guard and Airborne Divisions were sent in to put down urban rebellions led by African Americans. Just over the last two years, National Guard forces have been sent into Ferguson (2014), Baltimore (2015), Milwaukee and Charlotte (2016) in the aftermath of African American rebellions sparked by the police killings of civilians.

Local police agencies have been supplied with military equipment such as armored personnel carriers, long range acoustical devices, chemical agents, helicopters and

sophisticated intelligence technology by the federal government. Under the present regime it is inevitable that the transferal of this hardware will increase.

Moreover, Trump's administration is maintaining that its loss of the popular vote from the November 8 election is a direct result of voter fraud. Trump won in the Electoral College with 306 votes but only earned nearly 3 million less popular votes than his rival Democratic Party candidate Hillary Clinton.

Allegations of massive voter fraud are often utilized to further suppress the electoral weight of African Americans and other nationally oppressed groups. Rev. Edward Pinkney of Berrien County, Michigan in 2014 was falsely accused of altering five dates on recall petitions aimed at removing a mayor who was perceived as a functionary of Whirlpool Corporation which is based in Benton Harbor. Rev. Pinkney was charged with felony forgery, tried by an all-white jury and judge and given a 30-120 months sentence in state prison.

The removal of the enforcement provisions of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 by the U.S. Supreme Court in the infamous Shelby County v. Holder ruling in 2013 has effectively weakened one of the gains resulting from the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. Such an investigation by Trump is clearly politically motivated since no statistical studies have indicated this level of voter irregularities.

#### Neo-Fascism and Capitalism

Since the election of Donald Trump to the White House, the New York Stock Exchange has risen by hundreds of points surpassing the 20,000 mark on January 25. This of course does not translate into an improved standard of living for working people.

Poverty and deprivation is increasing in the U.S. and internationally where capitalism is the dominant economic system. The mega-profits of the banks, manufacturing firms and oil conglomerates have brought greater misery to the workers, farmers and youth. Since 2007-8, when the worse financial downturn since the Great Depression began, there have been repeated announcements of a "recovery" and "prosperity."

Under the previous administration of President Barack Obama, the end of the financial crisis was declared on numerous occasions. Nevertheless, millions remains jobless, underemployed and poor in the U.S despite an "official" unemployment rate of less than 5 percent. The labor participation rate, which is a more accurate measurement of the state of the working class and nationally oppressed, remains at an abysmal 62.7 percent. (Business Insider, Jan. 6)

Nonetheless, the rising stock market indicates Wall Street is satisfied that the Trump program of far-right domestic and foreign policy imperatives are compatible with the unbridled quest for maximum profits by international finance capital. Most neo-fascist movements are led by representatives of the bourgeoisie who pander to the fears of key sections of the working class and middle strata.

The Trump cabinet and leading appointees are representative of numerous financial and defense corporations. None of the members of his team have any identifiable history of concern with the plight of the workers and oppressed.

#### Towards a United Front in the Present Period

This approach to electoral and administration politics has also prompted mass demonstrations and disaffections from the system. Millions of women protested throughout the U.S. and the world on January 21.



On inauguration day itself, hundreds of thousands demonstrated in the streets surrounding the White House and beyond, where over 200 people were arrested including six journalists. These media workers along with activists are being charged with felony riot. The cell phones of the activists and journalists were confiscated by the Metropolitan D.C. police placing their professional contacts and personal acquaintances in jeopardy of law enforcement targeting.

The ascendancy of Trump provides an important opportunity for the building of a broad-based united front of democratic forces including African Americans, Latin Americans, Native peoples, immigrants, women, LGBTQ communities, environmentalists and other working class constituencies. However, this alliance which represents the majority of the population within the U.S. must be based on sound political principles and not opportunism. The rights and demands of the oppressed must be upheld including foreign policy questions such as the dismantling of the military industrial complex, the liberation of Palestine, and the elimination of racist violence and institutionalized discrimination against the people of color communities.

This coalition of genuine popular forces should be organized outside the framework of the Democratic Party which represents the same ruling class elements as the Trumpist Republicans and their Wall Street and Pentagon supporters. Spokespersons at the Global Women's March on January 21 seemed to be suggesting that the Democratic Party can be reconstituted under different leadership which can provide a way forward for the masses. Such illusions could not be further from the reality in which the U.S. and the world are entangled.

A revolutionary mass party of the working class and the oppressed is the only solution to the current political and economic crises. The capitalist and the imperialist system led by Washington and Wall Street have nothing to offer the peoples of the globe except further impoverishment and imperialist war.

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