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www.afgazad.com

afgazad@gmail.com

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By Kevin Martinez
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Trump may send 15,000 troops to US-Mexico border

President Trump announced on Wednesday evening he was considering deploying another 10,000 to 15,000 soldiers to the US-Mexico border. This follows the present deployment of 5,000 active-duty soldiers to the region to stop the entry of a migrant caravan as it makes its way through Mexico.

As of press time Trump's proposal received muted media coverage and was not referenced on the online front page of the *New York Times*. Democratic politicians have downplayed the significance of the deployment, calling it a "stunt" by Trump to curry favor with his fascistic base one week before the midterm congressional elections.

While there are undoubtedly electoral considerations behind the Trump administration's moves, the tripling or quadrupling of troop presence on American soil is a further milestone in the attack on democratic rights and the savage war on immigrants. What is being prepared in the southwest United States is an army of occupation, the size of which has not been seen since the border wars of the Mexican Revolution of 1910–20.

Speaking to reporters in front of the White House before departing to a campaign rally in Florida, Trump declared, "We'll go up to anywhere between 10 and 15,000 military personnel on top of Border Control, ICE and everybody else at the border," adding "Nobody's coming in. We're not allowing people to come in. Immigration is a very, very big and very dangerous, a really dangerous topic. We're not going to allow people to enter our country who do not have the well-being of our country in mind."

In a related press conference, the head of US Northern Command Gen. Terrence O'Shaughnessy was asked by reporters what the purpose was of sending the troops. "To secure the border," he said. "From what?" a reporter asked. He refused to answer.

The ostensible reason for the military operation dubbed "Operation Faithful Patriot" has been to free up the Border Patrol to carry out repressive measures against the caravan of immigrants, mostly women and children fleeing horrific violence and poverty in Central America. The 5,239 troops already being deployed will join the 2,092 National Guard troops already in place.

The announcement that the active-duty contingent may be more than doubled to 15,000 soldiers means the troop level would match the same number of American occupation troops in Afghanistan and triple the number of troops in Iraq.

In a statement, US Northern Command said shortly after the President's proposal, "The number of troops deployed will change each day as military forces flow into the operating area, but the initial estimate is that (the Defense Department) will have more than 7,000 troops supporting DHS (Department of Homeland Security) across California, Arizona and Texas."

The possibility that soldiers may fire upon immigrants crossing the border is very real. Defense Secretary James Mattis told reporters at the Pentagon that the deployment was no stunt, saying, "We don't do stunts in this department."

The military has announced the troops will use helicopters to transport CBP officers, build tent cities to house personnel, and construct barriers and medical units. Northern Command has identified 13 bases in California, Arizona and Texas from which US troops will operate as well as 14 bases from where they will be called from, totalling 38 active-duty units.

The legal implications are chilling as US troops will be used in a domestic operation explicitly forbidden by the Posse Comitatus Act. The news comes the same week as President Trump declared his willingness to overturn the 14th amendment, ending birthright citizenship by presidential decree, in an illegal move to deprive millions of immigrant children of basic democratic rights. It also follows the anti-Jewish massacre in Pittsburgh by a fascist, the mail bomb scare by a Trump supporter, and the racist killing of two shoppers in a store in Kentucky.