

US armed forces deployed to Mexico border in preparation for expected closure

By Norisa Diaz
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Nearly 1,000 members of the US military are taking up defensive positions along the US-Mexico border in preparation for an armed showdown with a peaceful and defenseless caravan of some 7,000 primarily Honduran migrants from Central America fleeing poverty, inequality and state violence.

Defense Secretary James Mattis announced Sunday that the Pentagon has already begun delivering equipment and deploying troops to the southern border, including jersey barriers, which could be used to physically block border crossings to vehicles and people.

US officials announced that roughly 800-1000 soldiers will be sent to the area to offer so-called logistical support to the Border Patrol, a categorization intended to conceal the potential for the use of military force against Central American workers and peasants. The troops will join the already 2,100 National Guard troops at the border, bringing the total numbers to approximately 3,000.

In preparation for the assault on the caravan, President Trump has taken to social media to criticize Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador for not doing more to stop the caravan, threatening to cut off aid. The entire spectacle is for the purpose of preparing the framework to justify unprecedented moves against immigrants seeking asylum, including the possibility of closing the border entirely. Trump is expected to announce a major new immigration crackdown in a national television address Tuesday night.

On Sunday Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen vowed that the caravan “is not getting in ... My general message to this caravan is: Do not come,” she said. “You will not be allowed in ... There is a right way to immigrate to the United States, and this is not it.”

The demonization of the caravan by Washington as “gang members,” and “criminals and unknown Middle Easterners” serves to justify the possibility of a military attack in the framework of the “war on terror” and the “war on crime,” despite the fact that both allegations are demonstrably false. These lies have mobilized fascist and deranged elements within society against immigrants.

The horrific killing of 11 people at a Pittsburgh synagogue is the result of Trump’s provocative fascist threats. Robert Bowers evidently chose the Tree of Life Synagogue as his target in part because it hosted a “National Refugee Shabbat,” organized by the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS).

“HIAS likes to bring invaders in that kill our people,” Bowers wrote on social media the morning of the shooting. “I can’t sit by and watch my people get slaughtered. Screw your optics, I’m going in.”

Emboldened by Trump’s xenophobic rhetoric toward the caravan, right-wing “patriot” groups and other far-right militias are currently on the move and arriving along the US southern border. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) sent warnings earlier this week to landowners in Texas that they could expect “possible armed civilians” on their property, making clear the government would not oppose the presence of rogue militia forces.

The drive and preparations along the border parallel the movements an army takes to prepare for battle. Armed forces are preparing for a military confrontation of an entirely unequal fight—the might of the US armed forces, equipped with the personnel and gear employed against the devastated people of Iraq and Afghanistan—against families and children with little more than the clothes on their back.

Both of the ruling parties in Washington have long

prepared the militarization of the border, with drones, infrared cameras, the expansion of the border wall, and by ballooning the size of CBP and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

Bryan Dean Wright, former CIA ops officer, threatened: "...unless we send a very clear signal that the border is closed. ... No one comes in uninvited, no one comes in unvetted."

Washington is preparing for a clear and bloody message. Kirstjen Nielsen, told Fox News: "We do not have any intention *right now* to shoot at people, but they will be apprehended, however. But I also take my officers and agents, their own personal safety, extraordinarily seriously. They do have the ability, of course, to defend themselves."

Already the caravan has been met with extreme violence by the Guatemalan police who attempted to stop nearly 1,500 migrants crossing the Guatemala-Mexico international bridge in Ciudad Hidalgo, Chiapas state, Mexico.

Numerous people have been injured, with videos surfacing showing weeping and injured migrants following police clashes and the firing of tear gas by Guatemalan authorities.

Authorities have already begun preparing such efforts. Border guards in El Paso engaged in a practice run on a border crossing between the US and Ciudad Juarez. US agents armed with assault rifles appeared unannounced, set up barricades, and closed the border for 10 minutes, causing panic among those seeking entry to the US.

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