

As nationwide protests continue

Trump steps up provocations and threats of military force

By Jacob Crosse
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In the face of ongoing nationwide protests against police violence sparked by the Memorial Day murder of George Floyd, President Donald Trump gave an interview Thursday night to Fox News in which he threatened to deploy military force to crush protesters in Seattle, Washington whom Trump labeled “domestic terrorists.”

Trump’s comments came in a video interview with Harris Faulkner in which he made clear that he has not abandoned the authoritarian agenda he laid out in his June 1 Rose Garden speech, in which he declared himself the “president of law and order” and threatened to invoke the 1807 Insurrection Act and deploy active-duty troops to put down the protests. The speech was accompanied by the use of federal forces to violently clear out peaceful protesters across from the White House to allow Trump to stage a photo-op in front of St. John’s Church holding up a Bible.

Subsequent press reports have established that only last-minute opposition from within the military command stopped Trump from carrying out a coup d’etat to establish a presidential dictatorship. Trump has since issued new threats to unleash the military and prepared new provocations to provide a pretext for martial law and dictatorship.

In the Fox News interview, Trump cited the “Capitol Hill Autonomous Zone” set up by anarchist groups and other middle-class protesters in a small section of Seattle and denounced the Washington state governor and Seattle mayor, both Democrats, for not suppressing it.

“We’re not going to let Seattle be occupied by anarchists,” he declared. “We are not going to let this happen in Seattle. If we have to go in, we are going to

go in, the governor is either going to do it ... one way or another it’s going to get done.” Trump reiterated his previous calls for police and National Guard troops to get “tough” with protesters.

At the beginning of the interview, Trump was afforded an opportunity by Faulkner to explain a May 28 tweet in which he repeated a comment first made in 1967 by the notoriously racist Miami Police Commissioner Walter Headley who declared, “When the looting starts, the shooting starts.”

Trump defended his incitement to police violence and associated it approvingly with Frank Rizzo, the fascistic police commissioner and mayor of Philadelphia between 1968 and 1980. In his unsuccessful bid for a third term as mayor in 1980, Rizzo urged his constituents to “Vote White.”

Trump hedged when asked about calls to ban police chokeholds and insisted that police violence was the result merely of a “few bad apples.” At one point he compared himself favorably to Abraham Lincoln, saying, “I think I’ve done more for the black community than any other president.”

His interview followed an appearance Thursday in front of hundreds of police chiefs and officers in Dallas in which the president again called on the police to “dominate the streets.” Following the police event, Trump held a campaign fundraiser at the mansion of billionaire Kelcy Warren at which he raised \$10 million.

Warren is the CEO of Energy Transfer, which built the Dakota Access Crude oil pipeline. The construction of the pipeline led to protests by the indigenous population of South Dakota and its supporters. President Barack Obama stood by as the protesters

were brutalized by state troopers, police, private mercenaries and National Guard soldiers.

Also this week, Trump announced that he would hold his first campaign rally since the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic on June 19 in Tulsa, Oklahoma, the site of the 1921 Tulsa race massacre in which hundreds of blacks were killed. June 19 has been traditionally celebrated by African Americans as “Juneteenth,” the day the Emancipation Proclamation was put into effect in Texas in 1865. The date and location of the rally were widely denounced as a provocation and incitement to Trump’s fascistic base.

Late Friday night, Trump tweeted that he had decided to move the day of the Tulsa rally to Saturday, June 20.

Earlier on Friday, it was announced that Trump will give his acceptance speech to the Republican National Convention to be held in Jacksonville, Florida on August 27. That will be exactly 60 years since a violent race riot in Jacksonville known as “Ax Handle Saturday.” After weeks of peaceful sit-ins and demonstrations by young civil rights activists, a group of 200 racists and Ku Klux Klan members, armed with baseball bats and ax handles, attacked demonstrators gathered at Hemming Park before moving on to assault African Americans conducting sit-ins throughout the city.

Today, Trump will address graduating cadets at the US Military Academy at West Point. The cadets were ordered back to campus in mid-April after Trump abruptly announced that he would continue with his previously scheduled commencement addresses, ignoring the continued spread of the deadly coronavirus.

Peaceful marches have continued in Seattle, where thousands silently marched in the rain throughout the day and into the evening on Friday. In south Florida, thousands marched through downtown Miami and down Interstate 95 before being ordered to disperse by riot police.

In Minneapolis, the site of George Floyd’s murder, at least 2,000 marched to the home of Lt. Bob Kroll, president of the Police Officers Federation of Minneapolis, and demanded his resignation.

Throughout rural America, youth and workers continue to gather at intersections holding up signs in solidarity with the anti-racism and anti-police violence protest movement. More demonstrations, sit-ins and

rallies are scheduled to be held across the country today.

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