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European Languages

زبانهای اروپایی

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۰۵, ۱۱, ۲۰۲۴

Governors in ۳ US states ready National Guard troops in response to threats of election-related violence

In recent days, the governors of three US states—Washington, Oregon and Nevada—have readied the deployment of National Guard troops in preparation for election-related violence.



National Guard members take a staircase toward the US Capitol building before a rehearsal for President Joe Biden's Presidential Inauguration in Washington, January ۱۸, ۲۰۲۱. [AP Photo/Patrick Semansky]

On Friday, Washington Governor Jay Inslee (Democrat) ordered the activation of an unspecified number of troops to support local police and the Washington State Patrol. In his declaration, Inslee cited recent attacks on ballot boxes and other “threats to election infrastructure” relayed by the Department of Homeland Security.

Ballot boxes in two cities, Vancouver, Washington and Portland, Oregon, were targeted with incendiary devices last week, resulting in the destruction of hundreds of ballots. More than a week after the attack the perpetrator has yet to be arrested.

In a letter to the adjutant general of the Washington National Guard, Inslee wrote: “The US Department of Homeland Security has warned that threats to election infrastructure during the 2020 election cycle remain high.” Inslee continued: “The southwest region of Washington state has already experienced specific instances of election-related unrest.”

The deployment of National Guard troops in Washington state comes in the midst of the ongoing strike by more than 73,000 aerospace workers at Boeing. The International Association of Machinists union has provoked outrage among the rank-and-file strikers for attempting to force through a third sellout contract that does nothing to address workers’ demands for the restoration of pensions and substantial wage increases. The vote on the tentative agreement is scheduled for Monday, one day before Election Day. If the contract is rejected, there is a real possibility that Inslee could order National Guard troops to be deployed to Boeing facilities to usher scabs across picket lines. The same day that Inslee ordered the activation of the Washington State National Guard, Oregon Governor Christine “Tina” Kotek (Democrat) confirmed to local reporters that the Oregon National Guard was “standing ready” to assist police in dealing with election-related violence. In an email to the *Oregon Capital Chronicle*, Kotek wrote that voter intimidation is “un-American and will not be tolerated.” “The governor’s office is closely monitoring and coordinating with local, state and federal agencies to ensure Oregon voters can safely cast their ballot,” the statement read. The *Chronicle* reported that Kotek refused to say how many troops were on stand-by, only that the number and their role would be determined by the police.

The same day that ballot boxes were lit on fire in Washington and Oregon, October 28, the Republican governor of Nevada, Joe Lombardo, announced that 60 National Guard troops would be “activated on standby status and stationed in Nevada National Guard facilities in both Carson City and Las Vegas.” According to Lombardo’s letter, the troops will be assisting police “on things like traffic enforcement and building security, and to coordinate and facilitate communication across the state if additional support is needed.”

Lombardo added, “After consulting with stakeholders across the state, I have decided that a precautionary activation of the National Guard makes sense at this time.” As threats of violence hang over the election, ex-president Donald Trump continues to

incite fascist terror against his political enemies and the press at campaign rallies across the country. Speaking in Lititz, Pennsylvania, Trump began his rally by referring to the press as “bloodsuckers” and the Democratic Party as “demonic.” “This [is] a large group of people... but it’s a very demonic party. It’s become that way... we do need people to say it,” Trump grunted. Later, Trump turned again to attacking the press. After complaining that his outdoor rallies needed bulletproof glass protection following an assassination attempt in Butler, Pennsylvania, Trump said, pointing to the press pen: “To get me, somebody would have to shoot through the fake news... and I don’t mind that so much. I don’t mind. I don’t mind it.”

In a feeble attempt to walk back Trump’s violent rhetoric, the campaign released a statement claiming that Trump was simply stating that the “Media was in danger, in that they were protecting him and, therefore, were in great danger themselves... He was actually looking out for their welfare, far more than his own.” Trump coupled his attacks on the media with more lies that the election was already being corrupted in Pennsylvania, including in pivotal Bucks County. As in ۲۰۲۰, Trump is trying to discredit and sow confusion about the election process in order to provide an aura of legitimacy to the Republican Party’s efforts to overturn the election should Trump lose. Despite this open coup-plotting, Vice President Kamala Harris and the Democrats refuse to warn the population or make any appeal for popular action to defend the vote. They are far more fearful of creating an opening for mass discontent to break out of their control than they are of a possible Trump dictatorship.

Speaking in East Lansing, Michigan on Sunday, Harris—after police ejected anti-Gaza genocide protesters—again extended an olive branch to the party that has nominated Trump as its candidate in three consecutive presidential elections. Harris pledged to seek “common ground” and “listen to people who disagree with me,” adding, “I don’t think that people who disagree with me are the enemy. In fact, I will give them a seat at the table.”

۳ November ۲۰۲۴