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USA

Trump Increases Repression Against Political Enemies and the Left

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President Donald Trump, breaking with U.S. norms, is using the Justice Department to pursue his political enemies, going after liberal and progressive foundations and NGOs, and sending more troops to another American city to intimidate protestors. He has fired Justice Department attorneys who are unwilling to put his orders above the law and replaced them with flunkies who will carry out his demands. He has promised “retribution” to his high-level political opponents and is now meting it out. And he is also targeting the political left, saying he will designate Antifa, that is the anti-fascist movement as a domestic terrorist organization, though there is no antifa organization and no legal designation for domestic terrorism. To carry out his campaign against Antifa he is sending troops to Portland, Oregon.

Trump's number one enemy is James B. Comey, former head of the FBI appointed by former president Barack Obama, who had been in charge of investigations of candidate Trump's campaign and possible coordination with Russian interference in the U.S. election. Comey's investigation did not find evidence of Trump colluding with Russia, but left his possible obstruction of justice an open question. Trump fired Comey in 2017, but has been out to get him ever since. When a U.S. Justice Department attorney said he couldn't find a legal basis to charge Comey, Trump fired him and replaced him with one of his personal attorneys who had been on the White House staff, and just days before the statute of limitations ran out, she indicated Comey for making a false statement to Congress, and obstructing a congressional proceeding, with a possible sentence of ten years in prison. Comey says he is innocent and welcomes a trial.

The Justice Department is also going after George Soros, a billionaire donor to the Democratic Party who also funds the Open Society Foundations (OSF). Trump for some time has demanded that Soros be thrown in jail. An internal memo says that Soros may be charged with crimes ranging from arson to material support for terrorism. The OSF, to which Soros has given billions, was originally founded to help Soviet Eastern Bloc countries achieve a democratic and capitalist society. But it also gives millions to civil rights and social justice NGOs in the United States, such as the Organization for Black Struggle. The rightwing Conservative Research Center accuses OSF of funding Al-Haq, a Palestinian human rights group that Israel designated as a front for a terrorist organization in 2022. OSF and other human rights organizations dismissed Israel's claim as an attempt to silence critics. There has not yet been an indictment of Soros.

Trump is also going after leftwing activists who are protesting against the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raids on immigrant communities and workplaces. In Portland, Oregon, a couple of dozen protestors show up regularly at an ICE facility to protest day and night, but after midnight federal agents come out of the building to confront protestors, resulting in skirmishes, but no serious violence. But now Trump is sending in the National Guard, as he has already done in Los Angeles and Washington, D.C., now supposedly to stop Antifa.

But both Democratic Party Governor Tina Kotek and Mayor Keith Wilson say “there is no rebellion,” which is the only legal justification for sending in the guard. Kotek said, “There is no national security threat in Portland. Our communities are safe and calm.” Adding that “any deployment would be an abuse of power.” Portland is known for its militant demonstrations and now there will surely be more protests against ICE and Trump.

The fight for democracy in America is on.

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