

United States - Trump Strikes Back, But Protesters Not Intimidated

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The Trump administration continues to press on with his reactionary agenda as mass protests also continue.

Wall Street and businesses big and small greeted Trump's election with elation in anticipation of his campaign promises to rapidly issue the elimination of regulations they regard as onerous, which he has begun doing since assuming office. The capitalists are moving to take advantage of these openings to rake in even more profits.

On February 13, there were protests by fast-food workers against Trump's nominee for Secretary of Labor Andrew Puzder. Puzder is the owner of fast-food chain Carl's Jr. and a sworn enemy of workers and the Labor Department he would have headed. He withdrew his nomination after some Republicans turned against him, not for his anti-labor record, but because he had hired an undocumented immigrant as a domestic worker, and failed to pay her taxes.

The next day saw a 20,000-person rally in Milwaukee in defense of immigrants and refugees. On February 17, a Thursday, saw many undocumented workers stay at home in "A Day without Immigrants." The next day actions in about 100 cities called by Strike4Democracy drew 100,000 according to organizers.

Over the weekend, thousands took to the streets. In New York City, there was a New Orleans style mock funeral march for the President, complete with a marching band and casket. LGBT protesters kissed each other outside Trump's hotel in Washington D.C. There were actions in Chicago, Dallas, Minneapolis, Los Angeles and along the border with Mexico.

On February 20, Presidents' Day, was called by protesters "Not My President's Day," in many cities.

Trump had two apparent setbacks. One was a Democratic campaign, aided by leaks from spy agencies, charging Trump with being in cahoots with Russia against the U.S. The second was a court ruling that stayed his ban on anyone from seven Mideast and African Muslim countries from entering the U.S.

The leaks concerned Trump's pick of retired General Michael Flynn as his National Security adviser. The leaks were purportedly of recordings by the FBI of Flynn discussing U.S. sanctions imposed by Obama with the Russian Ambassador. Trump let Flynn go on the grounds that he lied to Vice President Pence in denying he had such discussions, not on the larger question of relations with Russia.

He threatens to clean house in the spy agencies, and in other departments. He demands loyalty to his agenda.

This has raised a sticky question for the Democrats and those in the CIA or FBI who are opposed to

Trump. Trump says that these were leaks of classified information, and he demands that the leakers be put on trial and imprisoned for breaking the law. He is right that they did break the law.

But it is the same law that past administrations have used to imprison whistle blowers who leaked information exposing nefarious deeds of the government, including Chelsea Manning imprisoned for seven years under Obama because she exposed war crimes by U.S. troops in Iraq. This is also the charge against Edward Snowden for exposing the vast spy program the government wages against the American people, among other things.

Did the FBI break the law by spying on U.S. citizen Flynn? No, says the FBI, because they were only spying on the Ambassador when they recorded the conversation with Flynn. But the recording itself is classified, so leaking it is a serious felony.

Both Democrats and Republicans applauded the imprisonment of Manning and others who leaked classified information, and demanded the arrest of Snowden. Some, like Democratic Senator Dianne Feinstein, urged Snowden be tried for treason. Some, like Trump himself, called for Snowden to be executed.

During the campaign, when leaks (maybe from hacks by Russians) of dirty machinations of the Democratic establishment and Clinton against Bernie Sanders were revealed, Trump applauded the leaks.

So whether leakers of classified information are to be prosecuted depends on whether or not they support the positions of which gang of capitalist politicians. Another symptom of disarray in U.S. politics, which plays into Trump's assertion that a strongman is needed to set things right.

The system of hundreds of millions of government secrets "classified" to cover up their crimes is an attack on democracy, even bourgeois democracy. Down with this whole system! Good for the leakers!

The "world order" dominated by U.S. imperialism since the Second World War is fraying. What to do about it is putting the U.S. ruling class in a quandary. Some, like Clinton, want to push toward military confrontation with Russia. Trump seems to want to make a deal with Russia and go after China. Right now this is all up in the air, and what Trump will do is unknown, perhaps even to him.

Concerning the court order blocking Trump's Muslim ban, he is going on the offensive in two ways. One, he continues to press that the courts have no say in the matter, that it is his sole prerogative as President. In the meantime, his staff is preparing to reintroduce the ban with new wording to circumvent the court's ruling, and challenge the courts to rule on the new wording while implementing his new version.

He has gone on a massive offensive on another front in the face of the mass demonstrations against his attacks on immigrants. His Homeland Security Secretary, John Kelly, has issued new rules to speed up the mass deportations of undocumented immigrants.

Under the new vague guidelines, millions of immigrants could face removal. Almost any undocumented person could be detained and deported, even if they have never committed a crime while in the U.S. A traffic violation or mere suspicion by Immigration agents of having committed a crime would be grounds for deportation. Any immigrant who could not prove they haven't been in the U.S. for at least two years would be deported. Parents who bring undocumented children into the U.S. would be arrested and imprisoned.

The guidelines say, that "With extremely limited exemptions, DHS [Department of Homeland

Security] will not exempt classes or categories of removal aliens from potential enforcement (sic).” For now, the only exemption is those who were brought into the country as children by their parents that Obama said wouldn’t be deported, but that could change at the new administration’s whim.

To carry out these new guidelines, which take Obama’s deportation machine and put it on steroids, 15,000 new immigration and border patrol agents will be hired. This is the beginning of what Trump proposed in his campaign, of a new “deportation force.”

Trump’s press secretary said “the President wanted to take the shackles off [immigration and border patrol agents].”

Trump aims to demoralize and frighten the immigrants. Many immigrants with documents, and other Latinos, have family members who are undocumented, and they are also targets to be intimidated. Trump hopes to break their determination to fight back, but this will likely have the opposite effect.

Many progressives got their hopes up that the court ruling on the Muslim ban and the FBI leaks signaled that the powers that be would soon dump Trump. But the demagogue’s new offensive puts the lie to that hope.

The ruling class is doing just fine with Trump. His scrapping of rules on fossil fuel production, regulations on the banks, and his promises of big tax breaks for businesses large and small, are raising their spirits and the stock market is at historic levels. Even owners of private prisons (an atrocity itself) have seen their stock prices rise. New Education Secretary DeVos promises to end regulations on fake “universities” (Trump had one) that rip off unsuspecting applicants. Their stocks are rising, too.

We cannot put our hopes in them, or their Democratic Party lackeys. Right now, it is the mass protests we must look to, and help them to unite and eventually create a new political force to stop this would-be dictator.

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