

THE BIG UGLY: STEPHEN MILLER USES HIS WAR ON HOME DEPOT TO INVADE CALIFORNIA

Yesterday, Trump used the opportunity of a protest against brutal ICE action staged out of Paramount, CA (close to a Home Depot location) to federalize 2,000 California National Guard for force protection – a step towards, but still short of, invoking the Insurrection Act (see Steve Vladeck for a description of what Trump, legally, did; update: and an even more detailed description from Lawfare). Pete Hegseth has also floated sending the Marines to an American city, a suggestion Gavin Newsom called, “deranged.”

It’s all a transparent confrontation used to invade a blue city.

All this comes as the hours longshermen at LA ports work have dropped in half due to Trump’s trade war, and some of the workplaces ICE targeted were in the garment district, where actual manufacturing still occurs. In addition, Trump has promised to start cutting Federal grants to California, which led Gavin Newsom to point out that CA is a net donor to Federal taxes.

This was a natural escalation stemming directly from Stephen Miller’s shrill tantrums demanding that ICE focus more on law-abiding undocumented people rather than the criminal aliens he lied about during the election. The escalation comes in the wake of Elon Musk’s meltdown, which might otherwise make passage of Trump’s reconciliation bill funding a massive expansion of Miller’s gulag. It comes as a few libertarians – Tom Massie called for “Realistic border funding” and “No bloat for military industrial complex” in his pitch for a new “skinny” bill – focus on the huge funding for the gulag.



This initial use of federal troops in a blue city should be understood as an effort to build pressure to help pass the bill. It should also be used as an example of the danger of passing the bill – the kind of authoritarianism that Miller intends to wield if the bill does pass.

As Washington Examiner was the first to report (a testament to the kind of people who were pissed about this tantrum), two weeks ago Miller called senior ICE officials to a meeting in DC to berate them that they're not meeting his impossible quotas for arrests, 3,000 people a day. During the meltdown he had at the meeting, Miller *specifically ordered* ICE to start staging arrests at Home Depot and 7-Eleven. Miller *specifically* berated ICE officials *because* they were focusing on the criminal aliens around which Miller built Trump's re-election campaign.

ICE's top 50 field officials were given roughly a week's notice of an emergency meeting in Washington.

ICE's 25 Enforcement Removal Operations, or ERO, field office directors and 25 Homeland Security Investigations, or HSI, special agents in charge flew into Washington and descended on the agency's Washington headquarters last Tuesday, May 20. There, they were met by Miller, ICE confirmed to the Washington Examiner.

"Miller came in there and eviscerated everyone. 'You guys aren't doing a good job. You're horrible leaders.' He just

ripped into everybody. He had nothing positive to say about anybody, shot morale down," said the first official, who spoke with those in the room that day.

"Stephen Miller wants everybody arrested. 'Why aren't you at Home Depot? Why aren't you at 7-Eleven?'" the official recited.

One of the ERO officials in attendance stood up and stated that the Department of Homeland Security and the White House had publicly messaged about targeting criminal illegal immigrants, and therefore, ICE was targeting them, and not the general illegal immigration population.

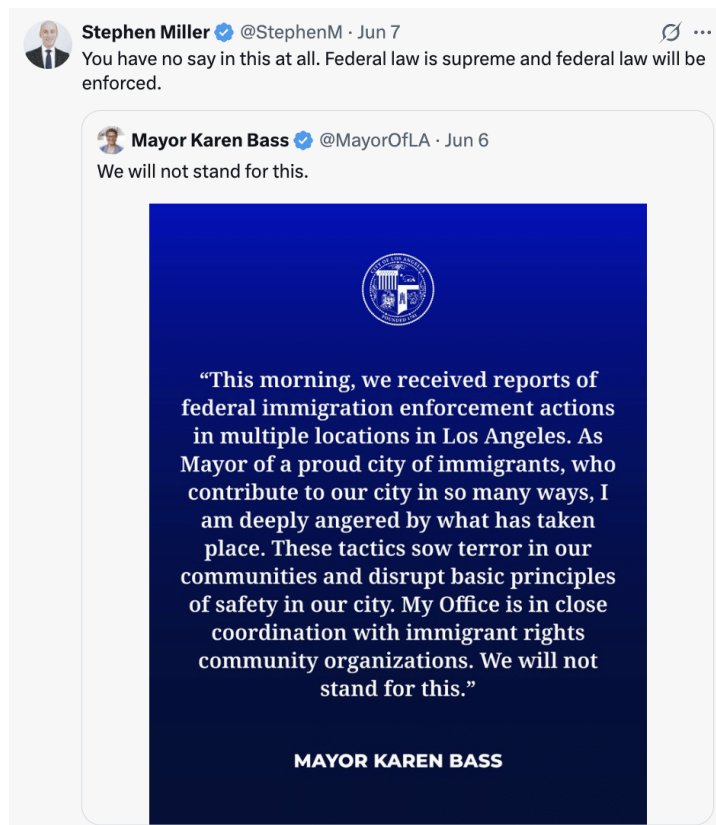
"Miller said, 'What do you mean you're going after criminals?' Miller got into a little bit of a pissing contest. 'That's what Tom Homan says every time he's on TV: 'We're going after criminals,'" the ICE official told Miller, according to the first official.

The protests started in response to two things: Raids on work places and also the detention of a growing number of people without food in the basement of a federal building – the latter of which Representative Jimmy Gomez was protesting most of the day. At an early tiny peaceful protest, ICE assaulted and then arrested SEIU California President, David Huerta, injuring him badly enough to require hospital treatment, during their assault. He remains in custody. The assault-and-arrest bears similarities to the staged confrontation at Delaney Hall and ICE's invasion of Jerry Nadler's office in recent weeks.

Huerta's treatment drew condemnation from Democratic leaders across the country, including LA Mayor Karen Bass.

Multiple Trump authoritarians, including Miller,

responded to Bass' condemnation of the violence ICE was wielding by insisting that "Federal law is supreme and federal law will be enforced."



From there, the protests against ICE grew, many of them mocking ICE. But ICE and LA Sheriffs (the LAPD deployed, but said it saw no violence) escalated. Nevertheless, protests remain localized (around the ICE facility and at the Federal building).

Numerous Administration keyboard warriors, including Miller, are tying the protest in Los Angeles to his Big Ugly bill, using the very same eliminationist language Trump's used to kick off an assault on the Capitol.



The through-line here is crystal clear.

Ratchet up raids on peaceful people to hit impossible quotas (ICE came close, but did not meet, Miller's 3,000 arrest quota on two days last week).

Use protests against that draconian invasion to arrest Democratic leaders and invade a blue city.

Point to the chaos created by Miller's draconian ICE raids to demand passage of the Big Ugly bill, which will codify and expand precisely that kind of draconian ICE raid.

Create chaos, and then use that chaos to try to codify authoritarian power.